

THE  
EUROPEAN  
CHURCHES

W. T. ELMSLIE





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by

W. T. ELMSLIE

**American Committee  
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## FOREWORD

DURING recent years Christian people in Great Britain have become increasingly aware of the existence and of the importance of the European Churches, whose significance during the war period has awakened the attention of much wider circles. Unfortunately there seems to be very little information with regard to these Churches easily accessible to the general reader. This little book, which makes no pretensions to scholarship or originality, is an attempt to provide a simple introduction to a vast subject; and has been written in the hope that it may do something not only to increase the present interest in the subject, but also to serve as a first guide for those whose interest has already been aroused, and who desire to explore for themselves this fascinating field of study. The Questions for Study Groups that have been appended may help to make clear how many of the tasks and problems of the Church in this country are shared by the Churches on the Continent.

I should like to express my indebtedness to a large circle of friends for most valuable help and advice very generously given.

W. T. E.

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# I

## INTRODUCTORY AND HISTORICAL

APART from a few million Jews and Moslems, practically the whole population of Europe was until recently connected, at least nominally, with one or other of the various branches of the Christian Church. This essay is an attempt to give a brief account of European Christianity, with regard to which so little information is available in English in a convenient form. It is hoped that it will provide British readers with a background against which they can study both humanist and totalitarian reactions against Christianity, and also modern tendencies and movements within the Church itself. The word "Church" is here used to denote the community of Christian people associated with the various national and denominational branches of Christianity; in other words, to include "the Churches."

If from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Vienna you were to draw lines through Europe southward, north-eastward and north-westward, you would divide the Continent into three parts corresponding very roughly with the three main traditions of Christendom. To the south and east you would find the bulk of Orthodox ("Greek Orthodox") Christians; to the south and west you would find the Catholics ("Roman Catholics"); whilst to the north you would find the Protestants. Naturally there is much overlapping, but the resulting diagram would give a reasonably accurate impression of the broad distribution of Christian people.

Within each of these main divisions, and between them, there are various important sub-divisions. At this point it is necessary to refer only to two. Between Orthodoxy and Catholicism there stand the so-called Uniate Churches, numbering several millions of souls, whose worship and Church order are roughly those of the Orthodox Church, though they own allegiance to the Pope. Protestantism, again, is divided between two main traditions, the Lutheran and the Reformed, with the latter of which most of the Protestant Churches in Great Britain are associated. It should also be noted that within each of the three main divisions varied but often considerable degrees of autonomy are enjoyed by

Orthodox, Catholics and Protestants alike, organised regionally, nationally or denominationally.

It is often taken for granted that one or other of the leading Churches is in the main historical tradition of Christendom, the remainder representing justifiable or unjustifiable deviations from this central stream of Christian development. As a matter of fact this claim is made on behalf of several of the larger Churches; but it would be truer to think of the Church as an oak with many important branches, though none that might be described as central; rather than as a fir-tree with a central stem from which lesser branches derive. A very slight historical sketch may prove helpful, in illustration of this contention.

When the Gospel first came to Europe, Rome was the political centre of the Continent; and as the various Christian congregations began to draw together, partly as a result of persecution and partly from a growing sense of the ecumenical ("world-wide"—"catholic") nature of the Church, there was a tendency for many of them to group themselves around the Christian community in that city; just as Jerusalem, Antioch and Alexandria grew to be the centres of other large Christian groups. The recognition of Christianity by Constantine the Great as the religion of the Roman Empire, and the transference of the central seat of authority in the Empire from Rome to Constantinople in A.D. 326, set up in the latter city a new and important focus of Christian influence. The prestige of Rome, however, remained enormous, both politically and ecclesiastically; and with the removal of the principal governmental officials, the bishop was left as the most important single official in that city, thus enhancing his authority.

From various causes, and especially owing to the sudden and powerful rise of Islam, under the inspiration of the prophet Mohammed in the seventh century, Asia and Africa were largely lost to Christianity, leaving only a few separate and independent Christian Churches in various regions (Copts in Egypt; Nestorians, Assyrians and Armenians in various parts of the Middle east; Jacobites in India); and the centre of Christendom was decisively transferred to Europe, where Rome and Constantinople disputed the primacy. In the far north-west, meanwhile, the independently organised Celtic Church exercised for a brief while a brilliant, scholarly and vigorously missionary rôle, and was not finally brought within the Roman sphere of influence until the twelfth century.



The continuous tension between the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Bishop (or Pope) of Rome finally ended in the year 1054 in a decisive break between Eastern and Western European Christianity, the main causes of dispute being concerned with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and with the use in churches of images, which Constantinople regarded as idolatrous. From that time onwards there has been little or no intercourse between these two major streams of Christian tradition, which divided Europe between them; a line drawn from the Adriatic to the eastern end of the Baltic roughly marking the line of demarcation. Very broadly, it may be said that Eastern Christianity inherited the intellectualism of the Greeks (hence, doubtless, the title "Orthodox") and the mysticism of the Slavs, whilst Western Christianity inherited the practical genius of the Romans and their claim to be masters of the world (hence the claim to be the "Catholic" Church).

During the succeeding centuries missionary enterprise succeeded in winning from heathenism the Russians and Lithuanians to the Orthodox, and the Hungarians to the Catholic Church; whilst, apart from the unhappy episode of the Crusades, the two Churches continued to develop independently of one another.

In Western Christendom the Church experienced periods both of brilliance and of decadence during the mediæval era; but towards its end it had become exceedingly corrupt, both in its central administration in Rome and in the parishes and monastic establishments throughout Europe. Neither notable instances of excellence (for example, in the architecture, literature and scholarship of the period), nor occasional splendid efforts at reform and at a return to a more primitive saintliness, can obscure the general fact that the Church during this period had sunk to a low ebb, more particularly in its moral life. The approaching break-up of feudalism and the rise of national feeling in western Europe presented problems of a different order; and gave rise to widespread criticism both of the hierarchical order and of the claims of the Church to be supra-national.

Many were the efforts at reform during these years. We may mention as typical the Franciscan movement with its revolt against luxury and its glorification of simplicity; the Dominican movement with its emphasis upon preaching and teaching, as against the widespread ignorance and laziness of the priest-



hood, the movement for reform through the holding of ecumenical councils, promoted by Christian lawyers and scholars in revolt from the inefficiency and scandals of papal rule (for many years there were two or even three rival popes claiming the throne of St. Peter, and the private lives of some of these popes caused grievous shame to the Church). Here and there small companies of Christian people broke away altogether from the Church, which they regarded as no longer the true Church of Christ, and maintained Christian worship and witness in independence, and often in spite of severe persecution. But the power of the Church remained unbroken, and for many years all attempts at reformation failed.

At length, however, the pressure on the Church from outside, combined with its own corruption within, produced the inevitable result in what we generally know as the Reformation. Commencing in 1517 in Germany through the protests of the monk, Martin Luther, against the sale of indulgences in order to finance the building of the new cathedral of St. Peter in Rome, it rapidly spread throughout the greater part of northern and western Europe. At almost the same moment a similar movement had arisen under the leadership of Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland, which had always sat light to the claims of Rome; and this latter movement soon received powerful support through the adhesion of the brilliant young Frenchman John Calvin. Attempts to unite the German and Swiss Reformations unfortunately failed, partly on theological grounds, partly perhaps because of German suspicion of the too democratic Swiss; and henceforth Protestantism followed two main parallel but distinct traditions: the Evangelical or Lutheran, and the Reformed or Calvinistic.

This is not the place to discuss more recent developments on the Continent, or the course of subsequent history in the British Isles and America. With regard to the latter it will perhaps suffice to say that the predominant influence in the Reformation in Great Britain was Calvinistic, though in the case of the Church of England the reforms were not as far-reaching as the continental Calvinists would have desired; and the various other denominations that have since arisen might almost all, with the exception to some extent of the Methodists, be regarded as variations of the Reformed or Calvinistic type of Protestantism.

It is important at this stage to note, first, that no branch of the Western Church considers that it came into existence



at the time of the Reformation. Each claims that it continues the life and tradition of the Church of the New Testament, after purging away the corruptions and accretions which marked the mediæval Church towards the end; second, that every branch of the Western Church did in fact undergo reformation at about that same period.

Certain groups had arisen, at the time of the Reformation, which repudiated almost entirely the idea of the organised Church. These held that in New Testament times there was no central Church organisation; that Christian life and fellowship was much more important than organisation, and that organisation was indeed likely to stifle true Christianity. Accordingly they adopted what they regarded as true New Testament Christianity, returning to "mission-field" conditions, often repudiating both the priesthood and the ministry, frequently endeavouring to live according to the literal wording of the Sermon on the Mount. These groups, Anabaptists and others, are usually referred to on the Continent as the "Sects," and are still numerous especially in Russia and eastern Europe and in the Anglo-Saxon countries. In the latter, although they have influenced some of the Free Churches, their true modern successors are to be found in such movements as those of the Plymouth Brethren, the Four-Square Gospel, and the like.

Less radical than the Sects, yet more radical than other groups in their understanding of the Reformation, were the Calvinists, who claimed to be the Church reformed according to the New Testament (hence the title "Reformed"). These felt that the mediæval Church needed to be reformed in almost every particular, if it was to be restored to the New Testament pattern. They therefore reformed and (as they believed) purified and restored first its theology, secondly its worship, thirdly its organisation, and fourthly its morals. Calvin's *Institutes* were a great attempt to set forth anew the Christian theological position in the light of the New Testament, contrasted with the theology that had grown up during the fifteen centuries of the Church's existence. The attempt was made to model worship also upon New Testament examples, and to conduct it in the language of the people. With regard to organisation, government by elders ("presbyters," hence "Presbyterianism," the Anglo-Saxon name for the main stream of Reformed Christianity) and Church courts was substituted for government by bishops and the hierarchy,

again with the claim that this type of government found its sanction in the New Testament. Finally, a vigorous and by no means unsuccessful attempt was made to cleanse the Church of the many scandals to be found within it by the adoption of a more austere and simple type of living.

The Lutheran Reformation went far in the same direction, yet not so far. Lutheran theology is in many respects strongly contrasted with mediæval theology, and for Luther himself the need for reformation in this sphere was at least one of the main causes of his break with Rome. The Lutherans also introduced great changes into public worship, notably in adopting the language of the people, and in abolishing the Mass (though with regard to their views on the Lord's Supper they were not so radical as the Calvinists). So far as possible they maintained the mediæval Church organisation, though even here changes were necessitated. For practical reasons bishops were in some areas succeeded by General Superintendents, though elsewhere they were maintained with reduced status, and shorn of their temporalities. In this sphere, however, the most important change was due to political necessity, which induced Luther to grant to Protestant princes a very large place in the leadership and direction of the Church. The Lutheran Reformation in morals was, of course, thorough, though a less austere type of character was encouraged than was the case with the Calvinists.

It may be of interest here to refer to the degree to which the Reformation took place in the Church of England. Here, again, in the theological sphere the change was drastic, the chief influence in the sixteenth century being that of Calvin. So far as worship was concerned great changes also took place, although the liturgy was so far as possible retained in its original form except where translation into English, and the change in theological views, made alterations necessary. The Church of England, however, retained very largely the organisation of the mediæval Church, simply substituting the King for the Pope as its titular head. Once again the reformation in morals was complete.

Finally, that part of the Western Church which still remained in communion with Rome itself underwent reformation as a result of the lengthy deliberations of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), called to consider how the Church might so reform itself as to claim once again the allegiance of western Europe as against the various Churches that had recently



separated themselves from the papal authority. The reformation in theology, in worship and in organisation was of course much less thorough-going than in the case of the other Churches, but was none the less considerable in each of these spheres; various causes of scandal, superstitious beliefs and practices, and other corruptions and accretions being swept away, and the moral life of the Church thoroughly cleansed.

A general survey of Europe, therefore, shows in the east a Church which has undergone no spectacular reformation, but which, while maintaining the old traditions, has suffered considerable external changes through the independent organisation of national Orthodox Churches in various lands; and in the west a group of Churches, all inheriting the traditions of mediæval Christendom, and all to a greater or less degree having undergone reformation during the sixteenth century. We shall turn now to each of the main traditions and look more closely both at their life, traditions and worship, and at their territorial distribution; and finally will attempt to assess their possible contributions to the solution of the main problems that confront the Church in the present age.

## II

### THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

THE Eastern Orthodox Church is the historic representative of that part of the early Christian Church which was to be found within the domains of the Eastern Emperor, after the division of the Roman Empire between Rome and Constantinople. It claims to maintain the unchanging tradition of the Faith, to be truly Catholic, and to be in the genuine Apostolic succession. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, it recognises no one supreme pontiff, but seven more or less equal patriarchs, each supreme in his own province; the dignity of "Ecumenical Patriarch" being reserved for the patriarch of Constantinople who is thus perhaps recognised as the first amongst seven equals.

The Orthodox Church consists of those Churches which have accepted all the decrees of the first seven General Councils, and have remained in full communion with one another, together with such other Churches as have grown out of these without loss of communion. The various national Churches possess different degrees of independence, several being fully autocephalous or independent of outside jurisdiction, though all would defer to the authority of a General Council. The Church, therefore, so far as its government is concerned, may be roughly compared with the British Empire—an association of free and equal communities, together with a few dependencies, held together by tradition and by adherence to a common symbol; in the case of the British Empire, the Crown; in the case of the Orthodox Church, the Faith.

Strangely enough, however, the Faith is not summarised in creeds in the Western sense of the word. Orthodoxy regards a creed as an adoring confession of the Church engaged in worship, rather than as a compendium of doctrine. The doctrines of the Church may, however, be gathered from the ecumenical creeds of the early undivided Christian Church, studied in the light of various more recent testimonies that have attained to greater or less common acceptance amongst Orthodox churchmen as authoritative. The causes of the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches were numerous, resulting partly from political, partly from theological,



and partly from historical causes; but amongst these causes of division, which became final in 1054, the disputes over the adoration of images and over the doctrine of the Holy Spirit were perhaps the most important.

Whilst in the early days the Orthodox Church was stronger in Asia and north-eastern Africa than in Europe, that is no longer the case; since the rise of Islam and the separation of various schismatic or heretical Christian communities on the one hand, and the conversion of the Slavs, and especially the Russians, on the other, entirely altered the balance. Even to-day it is probable that there are as many Orthodox Christians in Russia as in all other countries combined.

In comparatively recent times the Orthodox Church may be said to have awakened from a long slumber. Many of its monasteries have been reformed and renewed. Partly perhaps as a result of the impact of various forms of Protestantism, preaching has been given a new place in the activities of the local parish priests, and Sunday-schools and other Western ideas introduced. Contact has also been made with the ecumenical movement and with the Anglican Church, and at all important Church conferences the voice of Orthodox theologians and ecclesiastical statesmen is now heard. Through such organisations as the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius in England, efforts are being promoted to make known amongst Christians of other communions the special contribution of the Orthodox Church to the whole Church of Christ.

As, in the Orthodox Church, parish priests must in practice be married, whilst bishops must be celibate, the latter are necessarily recruited from the ranks of the monks. Monasticism is, or was, very widespread throughout the Church, the monks being frequently simple good people who desire to live the Christian life apart from the temptations and troubles of the world. They are largely of two kinds, those who dwell in monastic communities, such as those on Mount Athos or in the Peninsula of Sinai, where all possessions are held in common and the monks devote themselves to prayer and to simple agricultural and other tasks; and those who dwell alone, sometimes in loose connection with a neighbouring monastic community.

The parish priests occupy a position not dissimilar from that of parish clergymen in England, being responsible for the conduct of the services in the village church, and for the spiritual oversight of their parishioners; and they frequently



look after their own glebes or farms. The language of worship is usually either Old Greek or Old Slavonic, which differ from the language of modern Greeks or Slavs much as Chaucer's English differs from that of our own day; though modern spoken languages are sometimes used as, for instance, in Roumania. There is plenty of singing in the services, but no instrumental music. Prayer is offered standing and facing towards the east; at Pentecost, kneeling. A considerable variety of service books is in use. The churches are freely ornamented with religious paintings and with ikons (or pictures of saints and holy personages that are used as aids to worship both in churches and in the homes of the people); but there are no images apart from the crucifix. At the Eucharist the consecrated bread is broken into the wine, and both elements are given together to communicants in a spoon. The ritual and vestments are as magnificent as in the Roman Catholic Church, though perhaps of a more archaic type.

The Orthodox churchman thinks of worship as something that is continually being offered by the saints and angels, rather than as something offered by men in certain places at certain hours. He thinks, therefore, of Church worship as something which is essentially corporate, and which in this sense his presence or absence will not affect; but as something in which it is his privilege to share, joining even now on earth in the worship of the celestial hosts.

#### NATIONAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES.

Orthodoxy and national feeling have gone very closely together in most of the countries of eastern and south-eastern Europe, and the boundaries of the various Churches, therefore, usually coincide with national boundaries. These, however, have suffered frequent change during the last century or so, with resulting tension in ecclesiastical affairs also. The notes that follow give some details of the principal national and other Orthodox Churches, though the stresses of the present war period may well produce certain changes within the next few years.

#### THE PATRIARCHATE OF RUSSIA.

The Russian Orthodox Church held a predominant position among all the Orthodox Churches prior to the revolution

of 1917, in view of its vast size and the vigour of its life. Since that date it has suffered serious losses both by secession and by schism, but probably still comprises some sixty millions of adherents. The attempt of the government of the U.S.S.R., at the time of the revolution, to set up a "Living Church" in opposition to that at whose head stood the Patriarch Tikhon, seemed at first to achieve some success; but this new organisation has now practically disappeared. In the U.S.S.R. itself the Orthodox Church has been almost entirely reunited under the Metropolitan Sergius of Moscow, who was recognised by the State as the locum-tenens of the Patriarchate on the death of Tikhon in 1924, and formally appointed and recognised as Patriarch in 1943. During the war the influence of the League of Militant Godless has been much reduced, and the Church has declared itself in full support of the national effort. Leaders of the Church have been appointed by the government upon important State Commissions, the manufacture of ikons has again been permitted, and priests in the army have been tacitly permitted to exercise their sacerdotal functions among their fellow-combatants. How far this improved situation will continue after the close of hostilities cannot at present be foreseen; but meanwhile, the prospects of the Church are certainly much brighter than at any period since the revolution. The constitutional position, however, still remains as it was: that whilst liberty of worship is accorded to the Churches, they are not permitted to seek to win converts or to undertake social and philanthropic activities; whilst liberty of propaganda is expressly permitted only to atheists.

The Russian peasant, according to all accounts, is still very closely attached to the Church. During the years of persecution priests in disguise moved about among the people, exercising some secular craft for their maintenance, and ministering to the religious needs of the faithful as opportunity offered. The training of their successors, however, has hitherto been a serious problem; and the refusal of permission to print or import the Bible and other religious books is likely in time to have a serious effect upon the quality of religious teaching throughout the country.

Partly owing to different understandings of the provisions for maintaining the patriarchal office during the persecution, made by the Patriarch Tikhon before his death, and partly owing to deep-seated political differences between Russians in exile and those in the U.S.S.R., Russians outside Russia



have been organised into dioceses and parishes of three different jurisdictions. One of these is that of the Patriarchate of Moscow; one has been formed by the Council of Russian Bishops in Exile; and one is led by the Metropolitan Evlogios, who claims to have received specifically from Tikhon the oversight of all Russians in western Europe. Those who accept the jurisdiction of Moscow are comparatively few outside Russian territory; those who accept that of the Council are mostly to be found in Yugoslavia and in the Far East; whilst the Russian Orthodox of western Europe mostly adhere to the Metropolitan Evlogios. In association with the last named is the important Russian Theological Academy in Paris, famous for the outstanding theologians that are connected with it.

It is to be feared that in eastern Europe, outside Russia, the war has added to the confusion in those parts of the Orthodox Church that historically have belonged to the Patriarchate. In those parts of the Ukraine, for example, which were for a time occupied by Germany, several Churches have been set up, each claiming the support of the faithful. It is probable that there will be still further changes here after the end of the war, and that the present situation is quite temporary; and it is therefore sufficient to mention that some of these fractions of the Church still adhere to the Metropolitan of Moscow; some acknowledge the notorious Archbishop Seraphim, a creature of the National-Socialist authorities in Germany, who appointed him to take charge of all Orthodox Christians in German-occupied territory; some claim that the Ukrainian Orthodox Church should be autocephalous or independent; and within this group there are those who wish to use the vernacular in worship, whilst others have organised themselves separately because they prefer to retain the ancient Slavonic language.

#### GREECE.

The people of Greece, with few but not altogether unimportant exceptions, belong to the Orthodox Church. The language of the liturgy used in this Church, as in most of the Orthodox Churches around the eastern end of the Mediterranean, is ancient Greek. The primate is the Archbishop of Athens, and the Church is closely associated with the Ecumenical Patriarch. In recent years there has been a revival of preaching throughout the Church, which—with reforms in



some of the older monasteries, directed towards their greater practical service—may be in part due to the influence of Western Christendom through the ecumenical movement, and in part to the activity of small Protestant groups in Greece itself. There has been a similar increase of interest in the religious education of children, and a number of Sunday-schools have been founded. The theological faculty in the University of Athens is one of the chief centres of theological study within the bounds of Orthodoxy; and, thanks to its excellent staff of professors, provides the Church in Greece with many well-trained and cultured clergy of liberal and progressive outlook.

#### YUGOSLAVIA AND BULGARIA.

Though there have for many years been national quarrels between these two peoples, the Orthodox Churches in Serbia and in Bulgaria, though independent of each other, maintain close relations and share the use of the old Slavonic language in their liturgies. The Serb Patriarchate includes within its jurisdiction some seven millions of Serbs, the other two main peoples of Yugoslavia (Croats and Slovenes) being attached to the Roman Catholic Church. Its leaders have recently taken a notable part in the ecumenical movement, and there has also been progress made in the training of its clergy and in its parochial life under the influence of a revivalist movement of preaching and teaching. The Bulgarian Church, which holds the allegiance of the great majority of the nation, differs from the other autocephalous Orthodox Churches in that a Synod of four of its archbishops exercises the function of its primacy.

#### ROUMANIA.

The Patriarchate of Roumania dates only from 1922, though the Roumanian people as a whole have, of course, for many centuries been attached to the Orthodox Church. Under the first Patriarch, "who had led the movement for Roumanian unity and enjoyed the unstinted veneration and confidence of the whole nation, an evangelistic campaign on the lines of the Salvation Army was at work, the universities were sending out well-trained clergy and the Patriarchate had become outstanding as a progressive Church."<sup>1</sup> Since his

<sup>1</sup> John A. Douglas, in *A Christian Year Book*, 1943 edition, p. 38.

death in 1939 and the outbreak of the world war, the position has been much changed. The Iron Guard, a nationalist organisation, included among its objectives the reform of the Church; in particular, it proposed to remove elderly Church leaders and to replace them by much younger men. The position is at present obscure, though it has been reported that the Church carried on vigorous missionary work in those parts of Trans-Dniestria which were seized from the Russians and occupied by the Roumanian army. Doubtless national objectives were intermingled with this activity, at least in the eyes of the state authorities, who have lent it their support. On the other hand, the greater part of Transylvania has been removed by the Nazis from Roumanian jurisdiction and handed over to Hungary; and the Orthodox in this province have been pressed to submit to Archbishop Seraphim, the German-appointed prelate to whom reference has already been made.

There are small independent Orthodox Churches in Finland and in Albania. Those in the Baltic States are said to have been suppressed during the war years, and during the same period the Orthodox Church in Poland, whose people are almost exclusively Russians and Ukrainians, appears to have fallen into chaos.



### III

#### THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE Roman Catholic Church is the largest and most powerful Christian community, not only in Europe, but also in the world as a whole. Officially it consists of all those who acknowledge and obey the Bishop of Rome—the Pope—as their spiritual chief, thus including the Uniate and certain other Christian bodies in eastern Europe and in the Middle East, even though these do not use the Latin language in their worship or insist upon a celibate priesthood. In popular usage, however, the title is restricted to those who belong to the “Latin rite”; and it is with that overwhelmingly large section of the Church that this chapter deals.

The term “Roman Catholic” is not ordinarily used by the Church itself, which describes itself as “The Catholic Church,” thus claiming to be not only universal, but also the true and only successor of the Church of the early centuries—the one true Church of Christ.

This Church is constituted by the union, under the Pope, of “some 1300 local churches (see or diocese is a more modern interchangeable term for church in this local sense) each ruled by a bishop, and each consisting of the clergy and laymen in a given delimited area.”<sup>1</sup> In addition there are Catholics in missionary lands and elsewhere, who are governed by the Pope himself through officials who may be bishops, even though circumstances do not permit the setting-up of territorial sees. “This system of episcopal government Catholics believe to be of divine institution—it was thus that Christ willed His Church to be governed—and although to-day it is generally the Pope who names the diocesan bishops . . . it is not as a delegate or vicar of the Pope that the bishop receives the authority by which he rules the local flock of Christ. That authority comes from God, as, in the sacramental consecration, the bishop-elect receives from God the spiritual power to make other men priests and bishops too.”<sup>2</sup>

The dioceses vary, of course, considerably in size from place to place; and, at least in some parts of Europe, archbishoprics cover a territory and a population roughly equiva-

<sup>1</sup> Philip Hughes, in *A Christian Year-Book*, 1943 edition, p. 57.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 57.

lent to some of the larger bishoprics of the Church of England. Each diocese is divided into parishes, and it is in these that the authority of the Church is brought into closest touch with the daily life of the people. "The main duties of the parish priest are to offer the sacrifice of the Mass, to hear confessions, to preach, to baptize and to administer extreme unction to the dying."<sup>1</sup> The confessional normally plays a larger part in the cure of souls than the pulpit; but British people, brought up in a strongly Protestant tradition, should beware of assuming that all their prepossessions against the practice of confession are in every case fully justified.

The parish priesthood, as might be expected, is not everywhere of one uniform type. In many instances the priests are highly cultured, devoted, zealous and saintly men. Elsewhere both their educational accomplishments and their personal devotion are less marked. The same is true, though perhaps to a lesser degree, of different ministers of religion even within our own country. Generally speaking, the quality of the priesthood is highest where the general level of culture and morality of the community is highest; or where peculiar difficulties and perhaps opposition demand exceptional qualifications, both spiritual and educational.

The clergy of the Roman Catholic Church are divided into two types, regular and secular, the former being members of the various religious orders, the latter working for the most part in ordinary parishes. Clergy of both types are under the obligation of celibacy. The regular clergy, in addition, take vows of poverty and obedience, and are outside the normal diocesan organisation of the Church, being exempt from the jurisdiction of the diocesan bishops. Their privileged position has often led to a certain tension between them and the secular clergy.

Among the religious orders the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) is by far the most powerful. Great power is vested in the head of the order, the "father general," who is elected for life; but in practice this power is controlled by a council of five assistants representing the Italian, Spanish, German, French and English-speaking groups of provinces. Three forms of activity are regarded as specially proper to the order—the teaching of the young, preaching to the ignorant and the heathen, and the training of Christians in the way of

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Phillips, in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, eleventh edition, vol. 23, p. 487.



perfection through the confessional and the "spiritual exercises," a scheme of devotional training devised by Ignatius Loyola (1492-1556), the founder of the order. The order has been especially distinguished by its foreign missionary labours, and by its championship of papal authority.

Even more numerous than the Jesuits are the Franciscans, though that important order is subdivided into several sections. The order was founded in 1209 by St. Francis of Assisi, and has exercised a wide influence from that time onwards. The Dominicans, or Black Friars, founded by St. Dominic in 1215 as an order of preaching friars for the conversion of heretics, are a branch of the Augustinians, but are now much less influential and numerous than the Franciscans, their work having largely been taken over by the Jesuits. Nearly all the religious orders trace their ultimate descent from the Benedictines, founded in the early sixth century by St. Benedict. These wear a loose black gown with large, wide sleeves, and a cowl on their heads, ending in a point behind. Especially in their early days they emphasised the duty of manual work, devoting much of their attention to agriculture, and later to the copying of manuscripts.

This is not the place to attempt to give a list of all the religious orders and their various divisions. It may, however, be useful to add that as each has its own special characteristics, and to some extent its own special type of activity, the variety is much greater than Protestants usually realise. Whilst some orders, like the Carthusians and the Trappists, cultivate the spiritual life in silence and retirement, others are busily engaged in the practical tasks of teaching or of charity; and the theological emphasis of the various orders is by no means uniform, but shows considerable diversity within the broad framework of the Roman Catholic system.

A non-Catholic, observing the Catholic Church, is impressed by the discipline of the Church over its members, rooted in the conviction to which reference has already been made that the organisation of the Church has been divinely willed as a hierarchy of priests and bishops under the supreme jurisdiction of the Pope. He is impressed also by the claim of the Church that it possesses and infallibly teaches the truth, embodied in the ancient creeds and in more recent pronouncements of General Councils, systematically set forth by the great theologians of the Church. The Pope, of course, is not regarded as infallible in all that he may say, but only when,

“ as shepherd and teacher of all Christians he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole Church.”<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, the observer is impressed by the personal piety that is shown by so many ordinary humble Catholics as well as by those whose devotion is peculiarly outstanding. He may not share the devout Catholic’s point of view, in approaching God through the mediation of the saints and of the Virgin Mary (the Catholic does not, of course, *worship* the Virgin or the Saints; he honours them and prays to them); but he admires the way in which the practice of personal piety seems to be so closely associated with the daily life of the people in many Catholic countries, and their usually very reverent attention during the offering of the Mass.

It is naturally impossible in this short sketch to give anything like an adequate account of the faith, order and worship of the Catholic Church, or of such important aspects of it as the conventual life which still attracts large numbers of men and women to a life of celibacy, devotion, and service as monks and nuns. Some reference must, however, be made to the attitude of Catholics towards other Christians, and to the question of relations between Church and State.

Generally speaking, where there is any considerable number of Protestants in the country, the attitude of the Catholic Church is one of readiness for joint action in the social and international, and parallel action in the religious sphere. In other words, it is prepared in these days for co-operation on the basis of natural law, but not for co-operation on the basis of Christian faith. The cordiality or otherwise of the relations between the two communions varies considerably in such countries, but generally seems recently to be improving, especially where Christians are faced, as in Germany and in occupied countries, with hostility on the part of the State to Christianity itself.

In countries, however, where Protestants form only a tiny minority of the total population, or where they are comparative newcomers, the attitude of the Catholic Church is one of hostility. This is particularly so where the Catholics have reason to suppose that Protestants are attempting to make proselytes through the lavish expenditure of money from abroad; and in such cases, as in Spain, the Church is prepared to seek the co-operation of the State in order to suppress the

<sup>1</sup> Vatican Council, 1870, quoted in *A Christian Year Book*, 1943 edition, p. 60.



Protestant community and especially to forbid to it any opportunities of propagating its faith.

In regard to relations between the Catholic Church and the states of Europe, it has to be remembered that the Pope is not only the head of a spiritual organisation, but also the ruler of an independent (though doubtless territorially very small) sovereign power, whose independent position has been guaranteed by the Lateran Treaties of 1929 between the Vatican and Italy. Recent Roman policy is broadly to conclude a concordat with each separate state. Whereas in general the State has been the active partner in the settlement of relations between itself and the Evangelical Churches, the State and the Roman Catholic Church, in concluding a concordat, meet together as two equally sovereign powers. "The concordat draws the frontier-line between the two powers, a line which binds quite as much as it severs."<sup>1</sup>

These concordats, or treaties, are usually based on a recognition of the true spiritual nature of the Church and the secular character of the State. They tend towards the centralisation of Church power, and the securing of a privileged position in the State for the Church and especially for the clergy. They secure such privileges for the Church as "the recognition of the legal personality of the Church or her institutions, the acceptance by the State of financial obligations towards the Church, the recognition of the right of the Church to a free exercise of spiritual power and jurisdiction, the consideration given by the State to the doctrinal position of the Church in regard to education and marriage, the granting of . . . secular power for the execution of ecclesiastical decisions,"<sup>2</sup> and a guarantee of free intercourse between the Catholic bishops in the country and the Holy See; though naturally it is not in every case that the State is prepared to concede so much.

The Catholic Church has generally encouraged its members to take an active and distinctive part in the political life of the countries in which they live, and has provided direction for such activities through agencies like "Catholic Action." The general tendency is for the Catholic Party, where such exists, to take a moderate conservative view; whilst in earlier days it was often the right-wing party, it is now, since the rise of extreme right-wing groups of the Fascist or Nationalist type,

<sup>1</sup> A. Keller, *Church and State on the European Continent*, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 213.

more often to be found in the centre. The Catholic politician for the most part is averse from revolutionary ideas, especially as regards property; but frequently takes an enlightened view of the need for radical reform of social conditions. A critic might perhaps describe his position, not altogether unfairly, as that of a benevolent feudalism in which, of course, the rights of the Church, including its right to serve the community, have a central place.

We conclude this chapter with a brief survey of the Roman Catholic Church in some of the European countries.

#### ITALY.

Until the reunion of Italy in the sixties of last century, certain wide territories in that land were directly governed by the Vatican, and were known as the Papal States. When these were united with the modern Italian state under the king of Sardinia, the Pope withdrew into the Vatican City as a protest, and relations between Church and State continued in a condition of tension until the signing of the Lateran Treaties, under which the Pope recognised the Italian state, and Italy in exchange recognised the independence of the Vatican City and accorded a privileged position to the Catholic Church within the Italian state. Though relations between Church and State have thus at length been regularised, there has always been considerable friction between political Catholicism and Fascism; with the result that the Catholic party was dissolved along with other political parties, and the influence of its leaders greatly restricted. Within Fascism itself, moreover, secularist tendencies had considerable influence. It is probable that with the collapse of Fascism the influence of Catholicism in the political sphere will be greatly strengthened.

Though the great majority of Italians are nominally members of the Catholic Church, many have comparatively slight attachment to the Church; and there is probably less widespread piety and zeal for the Church than is the case in some other countries.

#### SPAIN.

When the Spanish monarchy was overthrown, and when later left-wing elements secured power, the influence of the Catholic Church was greatly impaired; both liberals and left-



wing parties being predominantly anti-Catholic, or at least anti-clerical. Eventually all religious orders were disbanded, their members in many cases seeking refuge abroad; and the schools, which had been almost entirely in their hands, were placed under the administration of the State and completely secularised. Many priests, monks and nuns are said to have been rough-handled during this period, and Church property was in certain cases confiscated for the use of the State.

The civil war resulted in a victory for the forces of right-wing nationalism and clericalism, the influence of the latter being very considerable. Spain was again declared a Catholic country; the schools were returned to the religious orders; the Church was given a privileged position in the State; and not only the left-wing parties but also the tiny Protestant minorities were severely repressed.

#### FRANCE.

In pre-war France, out of a total population of about forty millions, the Roman Catholic Church claimed only some ten millions.<sup>1</sup> Of the remainder about twenty-eight millions seem to have been wholly out of touch with religion of any kind. Ever since the time of Napoleon, France has been the scene of political strife between the Catholic Church and other elements of the population; at some periods the State has been completely secular, giving no recognition to any Church; at others it has accorded recognition and some assistance to all Churches in proportion to their size and influence; and at yet others it has recognised the Roman Catholic Church as being in a special sense the Church of the nation. With the setting up of the Vichy government an attempt was made to give new recognition to Christianity (both Catholic and Protestant), and the government sought by every means to strengthen the influence and the position of the Churches. It is to be feared that the resulting clericalism might well have produced a vigorous anti-Church reaction, had it not been for the fact that tension soon arose between the Churches and the State in regard to policy with regard to the Jews, and that the Churches (both Catholic and Protestant) became more and more closely associated with the underground "resistance movement." It would be difficult to forecast the prospects for Christianity in this country in the

<sup>1</sup> A. Keller, *Church and State on the European Continent*, p. 316.

future; but there are hopeful signs of closer co-operation between both Catholics and Protestants and the working classes, and it may well be that the disasters of the war period, which have been widely attributed to a decline in national morale, may lead thoughtful people to take a renewed interest in the claims of the Christian faith.

#### GERMANY AND AUSTRIA.

Pre-war Germany contained a population, two-thirds of which was at least nominally connected with the Protestant Churches, one-third with the Catholic Church. For the most part the latter lived in western and southern Germany, the Rhineland and Bavaria. The Catholic hierarchy was of German nationality, and inclined to be somewhat suspicious of Roman interference.

The Austrian people are overwhelmingly Catholic, and when in 1933 a concordat was signed with the Austrian Republic it secured to the Roman Catholic Church a position of privilege and power unsurpassed in Europe, the constitution of the State being largely based upon Catholic foundations. National-Socialist elements, however, found themselves in opposition to this strong Catholic influence, and it was doubtless to some extent due to their pressure that large numbers of Catholics publicly seceded from the Church during the thirties of this century, some of them joining the Lutheran Church, whose sympathies at that time tended to favour union with Germany as against the Italian sympathies of Roman Catholicism.

With the absorption into Greater Germany of Austria and other German-speaking lands, the proportion of Catholics to Protestants rose till the two communions became, roughly, equivalent. At the same time, however, the pressure of the National-Socialist State grew more heavy, driving many Catholics and Protestants alike into opposition. The formerly powerful Catholic Centre Party was liquidated, and the Pope issued a strong protest against the virtual repudiation by the Nazis of the concordat into which they had entered—the famous encyclical “*Mit brennender Sorge*,” the first document of this kind to be issued in any language but Latin. Particular bitterness was felt by Catholics when the Church Youth Movements were disbanded in favour of the Hitler Youth, membership of which became practically compulsory for all young



people; and when Catholic schools were taken over by the State and various religious communities suppressed.

#### OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

Roman Catholicism, which is virtually non-existent in the Scandinavian countries, is particularly strong in Belgium and in Portugal. In the former country the population as a whole is zealously Catholic; the number of Protestants and of secularists being small proportionately to the total. In Portugal also the vast majority of the population is attached to the Catholic Church, and the regime is itself closely associated with Catholicism in its fundamental principles. In Holland the Catholics are said to amount to some 40 per cent. of the whole population, but their influence is less than that figure would suggest, the tradition of the country being strongly Calvinist. Since the occupation of Holland by Germany the Catholic and Calvinist political parties have been drawn closely together.

In Central Europe, apart from German-speaking lands, Catholicism is strongest in Poland, where the Poles are predominantly Catholic, and where before the war the Catholic Church held a position of considerable influence; the tendency being to equate Polish patriotism with membership of the Catholic Church, or at least to assert that no Pole could be a true patriot unless he were also a good Catholic. (German-speaking minorities were usually assumed to be Protestant, Ukrainians to be Uniate and Russians to be Orthodox.) Catholic predominance is much less marked in Hungary, where Protestantism has an influence quite out of proportion to its numbers, which are considerably inferior to those of Catholicism; but here also the influence of the Catholic Church is important, and certainly should not be overlooked. Actually about two-thirds of the people are Roman Catholics.

One of the problems of the Yugoslav state arose from the fact that the peoples of Croatia and of Slovenia were mostly Catholics, whilst those of Serbia and other parts of this composite country were predominantly Orthodox. Attempts have been made during the war, and since the compulsory separation of Croatia from Serbia, to liquidate Orthodoxy in Croatia; but it would appear that these attempts have been inspired by political motives which are not shared by many

Croats, and that the Catholic authorities have in some measure themselves protested against them.

Allusion is made elsewhere to the exodus from the Catholic Church that took place in Czechoslovakia after the declaration of independence of the Republic in 1918; but the greater part of the population still professes allegiance to Catholicism, and the Roman Catholic Beneš succeeded to the Protestant Masaryk in the Presidency. Slovakia is much more predominantly Catholic than Bohemia and Moravia, though it contains considerable German-speaking and Hungarian-speaking Protestant minorities; and during the period of its separation from the rest of Czechoslovakia under Axis pressure it has been under a government with strong Catholic and clerical tendencies.

Finally, it may be mentioned that there are considerable Catholic elements in the Baltic States, amounting to a clear majority in Lithuania and possibly also in Latvia, though in Estonia and in Finland they are numerically insignificant.

### *The Uniate Churches*

Situated uneasily between Lutheran Prussia and Orthodox Russia, Poland soon reacted against the early Protestant influences and adopted a strongly Roman Catholic attitude. In the eastern border provinces, however, there remained for some time an Orthodox population. In 1596 there was created in these regions the so-called Uniate or Greek Catholic Church, both in the interests of Catholicism and in the interests of the unity of the Polish Empire; for it was hoped in this way to detach the Orthodox Christians from connection with the Patriarch of Moscow, who was considered to be becoming an instrument of the Tsars, and from connection with the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was in the hands of the Turks. By this arrangement the Orthodox Poles retained their Slavonic ritual and customs, but recognised the supremacy of the Pope, and thereby were organically linked up with the Roman Catholic majority in the Polish state. The plan, however, was only partially successful; for the Polish ecclesiastical dignitaries grudged to the Uniate bishops the privileges of their rank, and thereby stamped the Uniate Church as that of the lower classes against Roman Catholicism as the religion of the governing classes.

After the partition of Poland the Uniates mostly came



under the authority of Russia, which used every effort, including a considerable measure of persecution, to restore them to the Orthodox communion; but the people, especially the peasants, stoutly resisted, and in our own day the Uniate Church has become closely associated with the movement for Ukrainian separatism as against Poland. It still numbers several millions of adherents, but is exposed to the propaganda of various other Churches. With official Polish State support the Roman Catholics were trying, during the period between the two world wars, to draw it nearer to themselves; but these attempts, notably the effort to enforce celibacy upon the Uniate clergy, aroused fierce opposition. On the other hand, new Protestant movements arose during the same period, declaring that the Uniate Church was spiritually dead, and seeking to claim leadership for themselves in the Ukrainian separatist movement. The position has grown still more complicated since the German occupation of Ukraine, with resulting strife between Orthodox Ukrainian Churchmen of varying political sympathies, and the setting up of rival ecclesiastical organisations each claiming to be *the* Ukrainian Church. Speculation as to the outcome, and as to the future of the Uniate Church, would, under present conditions, be largely futile.

It may be added, for the sake of completeness, that Uniate Churches are to be found elsewhere than in Poland, mostly (though not exclusively) among various branches of the Ukrainian people.

### *The Old Catholic Church*

This Church, which is said to number about 400,000 communicants, most of whom are to be found in Europe, is a body of Catholics who refuse to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope. It was formed towards the end of last century by the fusion of two groups of non-papal Catholics; of whom the earlier were mostly connected with the see of Utrecht in Holland, and left the Roman Church in the seventeenth century in protest against the efforts of the Jesuits to operate independently of the Dutch episcopate; the later seceded from Rome after the Vatican Council of 1870 in protest against the dogmas of papal infallibility and of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary. Adherents of the Church are to be found mainly in Holland, Switzerland and German-speaking coun-

tries. They exercise considerable influence because of the learning and sanctity of their leaders, and because of their intermediate position between Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and the Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant Churches on the other.

The Church accepts the first seven ecumenical Councils, and the decrees of the Council of Trent only in so far as these are deemed to be in accordance with the teaching of the primitive Church. Services are held in the vernacular, and priests are permitted to marry. With these exceptions, however, it holds a position with regard to doctrine, worship and order very close to that of the Roman Catholic Church. Since 1932 full intercommunion has been established between the Old Catholic and Anglican Churches.



## IV

### THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE Lutheran Church in Europe is to be found mainly in Germany and in the Scandinavian and Baltic countries, where the majority of the inhabitants are associated with it, though of course with varying degrees of personal conviction. Its form of government, its doctrinal position, and its type of worship vary considerably from place to place; but the whole Church adheres to the Augsburg Confession of Faith, and to Martin Luther's central "Protestant" doctrine of Justification by Faith.

Luther was prophet and preacher rather than systematic theologian, and he would himself strongly have resisted the use of the title Lutheran in reference to that part of the Church Catholic whose reformation was in the main due to his influence. Partly in deference to that attitude the Protestant Church in Germany is generally referred to as the Evangelical Church, though the term Lutheran is used when it is desired to distinguish between that branch of Protestantism and the Reformed (or Calvinistic) Church, whose reformation was in the main due to influences radiating from Geneva.

It was Luther's desire to make as few alterations as possible in the worship of the Church, though he insisted upon public worship being offered in the language of the people, and of course introduced such other changes as were necessitated by his doctrinal reforms. In Germany the Lutheran ministers usually wear a black gown and white bands when conducting the services of the Church, though in Sweden more gorgeous ecclesiastical garments are worn as in pre-reformation times. Upon the altar stand two lighted candles and an open Bible during public worship; and in the liturgy there is ample provision for congregational singing, as well as for the preaching of the Word. At the Communion Service communicants kneel before the altar, and receive the elements in both kinds.

Doctrinally Lutheranism is distinguished from Roman Catholicism mainly by its emphasis upon Justification by Faith, a doctrine that was closely associated with Luther's own personal religious experience. The Christian is justified, he declared, in the sight of God not by any supposed merits

of his own, or by any merits acquired by the saints and transferable by the Church to its members; not by good works or by pious activities; not even by his own faith; but by his faith, his trust, in Christ. Springing from this strong sense of individual, rather than group, salvation comes the kindred doctrine of the priesthood of all believers; the claim that every redeemed person has immediate access to God through Christ, without the need of either priest or saint as intermediary.

From Calvinism Lutheranism is distinguished principally by its doctrine of the Lord's Supper, claiming that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine. Whereas Roman Catholics claim that the substance of the elements is transformed into Christ's body and blood ("Transubstantiation"), and Calvinists that the elements remain bread and wine, Christ being present spiritually, not materially or "substantially"; Lutherans adhere to the view that the consecrated elements possess at the same time the substance both of bread and wine and also of Christ's risen body and blood ("Consubstantiation").<sup>1</sup>

Notable in all the Lutheran Churches, though not confined to them, is the form of personal and semi-mystical religious attitude known as "Pietism." This arose by way of reaction from a too rational and a too formal type of religion, in much the same way as Methodism similarly arose when the official Church in England was lacking in warm personal devotion. In Lutheran circles, however, Pietism never broke away from the Church, but remained as a more or less unorganised movement within it; and not only produced in certain quarters a rather other-worldly type of piety, but also inspired a number of splendid evangelical enterprises, such as Bible societies, home and foreign missionary movements, social and beneficent welfare organisations, and the like.

It has already been mentioned that there is no external uniformity of worship in Lutheran Churches, the liturgies used varying from one to another, though most of them are based to a considerable extent upon Luther's own "German Mass and order of Divine Service." There is similar diversity in regard to the organisation of the Lutheran Churches. From force of circumstances Luther found himself compelled to

<sup>1</sup> Those without training in theology or philosophy should note that the word "substance" is used in a highly technical sense to denote the underlying "essence" as contrasted with the "accidents" or visible and tangible properties of the bread and wine.



seek the patronage of the princes of the German States, in order to protect the reformation of the Church against Roman Catholic opposition; and in most cases the local ruler not only gave his protection but replaced the Pope as head of the Church within his own domains. Generally speaking, therefore, the State has taken a greater part in directing the Lutheran Church than it has been permitted to take where other forms of Christianity were in a majority; though at the present time there is a strong reaction on the part of all Lutheran Churches against State control. The close association between Church and State similarly led to the organisation of separate Lutheran Churches within each of the German Evangelical states, and in other countries to which the Lutheran Reformation spread; and the organisation of the Church in each of these areas developed on its own lines. Thus in the Scandinavian countries the Church is episcopally organised, though the functions of the bishops vary somewhat. In all, the rite of ordination is in their hands. In Denmark they are the inspectors of the clergy and the schools. In Sweden, where the king is the *summus episcopus*, though his powers are limited by parliament, they preside over consistories composed of clerical and lay members. In general, the episcopate in the Scandinavian lands accommodates itself to the consistorial system of government.

That system is generally followed in Germany. Here there are a few Lutheran bishops, *e.g.* in Bavaria and Württemberg; but elsewhere their functions, or some of them, are carried out by General Superintendents or by consistorial courts. These courts were originally appointed by the mediæval bishops to assist them in their work; when the bishops were removed, their functions were taken over by the courts, appointment to which was henceforward as a rule made by the civil authorities. Their members are both clerical and lay, and the presidency may equally well be held either by a cleric or by a layman.

Prominent in most of the Lutheran Churches is the "Inner Mission," an organisation closely associated with, though not as a rule directly under the control of, the Churches themselves. The Inner Mission undertakes a vast variety of tasks that in Britain are usually discharged by numerous independent societies. It carries on a certain amount of direct evangelistic ("Home Mission") work; but along with this many social agencies are maintained for such objects as the care of orphans,

the education of poor or "difficult" children, the healing of the sick through hospitals and convalescent homes. There are homes of rest for the aged, institutions for the reclamation of human "broken earthenware," research centres in social and missionary subjects. Whilst there may perhaps as a rule in Lutheran countries be less concern on the part of the Churches for the influencing of the State's social policy than in Britain or America, a very large amount of practical social service is undertaken by Christian people aided by the generous offerings of the faithful. Reference should also be made to the strong foreign missionary societies maintained by the Lutherans of Europe in most parts of the world where Christian missions are at work.

There are two criticisms of Lutheranism that are commonly heard in this country to which some allusion should be made here. It is frequently said, perhaps not entirely without justice, that the Lutheran Churches are in general too subservient to the State, and have not hitherto made the same stand for the independence of the Church as has been so marked a feature in the case of some other communions. The historic cause of this state of affairs, in so far as it does in fact exist, is doubtless connected with the necessity in Luther's day of securing the support of the German Protestant princes, and of finding some acceptable alternative to the Pope and the hierarchy to which authority over the newly emancipated Church could be given. At the same time this criticism is frequently over-stressed; and especially during recent times, when the friendly co-operation of the State could no longer always be expected, the Church has tended to take a much more independent line.

Secondly, the suggestion is often made that Lutheranism tends to be interested principally in rather abstract theological questions, and to be out of touch with the practical realities of the modern world. Reference has already been made to the work of the Inner Mission and of foreign missions, which illustrate an important aspect of Lutheran Christianity. Moreover, the Lutheran frequently replies to the criticism by himself criticising the "activism" of Anglo-American Christians, which to him often seems to be divorced from genuine Christian faith and little more than an expression of humanistic impulses. Of recent years the two groups have perhaps drawn somewhat closer together through the influence in this country and elsewhere of the renewed emphasis upon



dogmatic theology, which originated on the Continent after the last war, and of the "confessional" movement, which arose in Germany in 1933-34 and has already brought Continental Lutherans and Calvinists into close association. This latter movement emphasises the importance of definite witness by Christians to-day to the faith of the gospel, especially as it is expressed in the historic Confessions of Faith of the Church.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to some notes on the Lutheran Church in each of the European countries in which it is represented in some strength.

## GERMANY.

It was, of course, in Germany that the Lutheran Reformation took effect first, being usually dated from the time in 1517 when Martin Luther nailed his famous ninety-five theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg. The Confession of Augsburg, which was drawn up by Luther and his friend the theologian Philip Melancthon, and presented to the Emperor Charles V in 1530, is the historic symbol of the Lutheran faith, both in Germany itself and elsewhere.

Prior to the first world war most of the numerous German states had their own independent Lutheran Churches, so that there were close on thirty Lutheran Churches in Germany, each with its own territorial jurisdiction, though united with one another in a loose association which had no authority over its members. Some of these, in the smaller states, were very small; others, as in Prussia, were exceedingly large and influential. In Prussia, however, a union had been effected between Lutherans and Calvinists, under pressure from Frederick William III in 1817. In this United Church each congregation retained its liberty to adhere to the Lutheran or to the Calvinist (Reformed) form of doctrine; but in most other respects it was a genuine union, in which Lutheran influence was predominant.

The Lutherans held at least the nominal adherence of about two-thirds of the population of pre-war Germany, being especially strong in Prussia and generally in the northern and eastern parts of the country; but since the formation of Greater Germany under the National-Socialist régime, the proportion of Lutherans to the whole population has been reduced to about one-half.

Though the situation at the time of writing is somewhat

uncertain, hitherto it has been the custom for Church rates to be levied on all who claimed membership in any of the Churches. Those who so wished might contract out of the system, but could not in that case call upon the services of the Church for baptisms, marriages or burials, or claim the assistance of the ministers of the Church in any other connection. The rates were collected by the State, along with the State taxes, and handed over to the authorities of the Churches, less a percentage to cover the cost of collection. The State also paid an annual subvention to the Church under an arrangement whereby certain large Church properties had in former years been handed over to the State, on the understanding that an annual payment should be made by way of compensation. The money accruing to the Church from these two sources was for the most part used for the salaries of the ministers and for the erection and maintenance of church buildings; the support of evangelistic and humanitarian work being met from the offerings of worshippers.

Though worshippers were often numerous at Sunday services, the proportion of regular worshippers to nominal members of the Church was even smaller than is the case in this country; but the fact that there are fewer competing denominations in most districts of Germany led to larger numbers of worshippers being usually congregated within the comparatively few churches.

Students for the ministry are expected to undergo a long and thorough period of training, taking a university theological degree during its course. The fact that the Church has no direct influence upon or authority over the theological faculties leads sometimes to a certain difference of emphasis in matters of the faith; and there has been a tendency recently for seminaries to be set up in close association with the Church, so that prospective ministers may supplement their academic training with specialised preparation of a more practical and devotional kind.

The period of National-Socialist predominance in Germany has been one of incalculable importance for the Lutheran Church. To begin with, it led to the creation of one single Lutheran Church for the whole of Germany. The attempt of the State, and of the so-called "German Christians," to capture the Church caused, however, a serious struggle between the "confessionals," who proclaimed the sole lordship of Christ over the Church, and other groups who sought a com-



promise between the Church and the world, whether represented by the State or by secularism. In the course of this struggle, during which many Church leaders, like Niemöller, were imprisoned and others forced to seek refuge abroad, the hard-won union of Lutheranism in Germany was temporarily lost once more, several of the constituent Churches reverting to a position of independence. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the struggle has brought home to large sections of the population, both friendly and unfriendly, the importance of the religious question and its relevance to the conditions of the present age.

#### SCANDINAVIA.

By far the greater part of the people in Scandinavian lands belongs to the Lutheran Church. In Denmark, which accepted the Lutheran Reformation in 1537, the two outstanding names in modern Church history are those of Grundtvig and Kierkegaard. The former led a cultural and religious revival in the first half of the eighteenth century; and the Folk High Schools, which he founded for the appropriate education of adults engaged in agriculture, still retain a strong religious flavour and wield a very wide influence. The latter, who lived from 1813–1855, was a theologian whose views were repudiated in his own days, but whose influence upon recent theologians and other thinkers is of very great and perhaps increasing importance.

The Church of Norway is divided into seven dioceses, among which that of Oslo enjoys a primacy of influence, though its bishop has no jurisdiction over the other bishops. As in all the Scandinavian Lutheran Churches the episcopal system has been retained; the bishops are normally appointed by the State, but once appointed and ecclesiastically consecrated they hold a position independent of the State. During the occupation of Norway the whole population has rallied round Bishop Berggrav of Oslo and those other bishops whom the temporary State authorities attempted to remove from office, and has refused to recognise those who were appointed in their place.

The Norwegians are not specially noted for regular attendance at Church worship; but from time to time revivals have swept the country; and a very vigorous missionary movement has been maintained. The Lutheran Free Churches present a

picture of greater evangelical zeal, though their numbers are comparatively small. Prior to the war there was little association between these Free Churches and the national Church; but the two groups have been brought into the closest connection by the events of the period of occupation, which have done so much to bring new life to the Church—an experience shared in other occupied lands.

There is perhaps no country in Europe in which the relations between Church and State are at present so happy as they are in Sweden. Though there are considerable communist and secular influences in the country, the position of the Church in the State seems to be well assured, and to be based rather upon mutual respect and mutual recognition than upon legal instruments, however adequate these may be. On the whole, Lutheranism in this country, while stressing its Protestantism in the sphere of doctrine, inclines to a High Church position in regard to Church order and ceremonial. Following upon the initiative of the late Archbishop Söderblom, the Church during the last quarter century has taken a lead in the ecumenical movement and in all that has to do with the social application of the Gospel; and the research institute at Sigtuna has recently become an important centre of Christian co-operation, second only to Geneva. As in other Scandinavian lands there is a small Free Church movement, but by far the greater part of the population belongs to the national (Lutheran) Church, with which the Free Churches themselves continue to be associated.

#### THE BALTIC STATES.

Finland, which may for convenience be described as a Baltic State, is a Lutheran country, with a fringe of Orthodox Christians dwelling on its eastern borders, at least before the war with Russia. About one-third of the population uses the Swedish language, and like those who speak Finnish these belong to the Lutheran Church. Though prior to the war religion had lost some of its hold upon the masses of the people, as in other European lands, there has for long been among the Finnish peasants a popular, somewhat pietistic, type of faith, which expresses itself in large informal conventions for prayer, praise and exhortation. Official Lutheranism is of a somewhat High Church type, which lays considerable stress upon Church order. Though the majority of the people are



engaged in agricultural pursuits there is an advanced sense of social responsibility for which the Church is at least in part responsible; and the Church takes an active part in foreign missionary enterprise.

Estonia is largely a Lutheran country, closely akin in race, language and customs with Finland. At least during the early days of the republic, in the twenties of the present century, it was governed on enlightened lines, with due consideration for the German (Lutheran) and Russian (Orthodox) minorities; but friction between these various elements was not always avoided, and disputes as to the right to use the various church buildings by one or other of these groups took place from time to time and were not easily solved. There was some bitterness, in particular, on the part of the German Lutherans (the so-called Baltic barons), whose Church lands were distributed among the peasants along with the lands of all the larger landowners; and to whom State support for the Church seemed insufficient. The removal of the Germans to Germany during the winter of 1939-40, and the subsequent occupation of the country, first by Russia and then by Germany, have produced a new situation which it is difficult at present clearly to envisage.

The situation in Latvia before the war resembled that in Estonia, though here about half the population was connected with the Roman Catholic Church. The people are of a quite different race from those of Estonia, but developments in regard to Church matters have followed the same pattern during recent years, and the outlook is equally difficult to discern.

In Lithuania, the latest of all the European nations to be converted to Christianity, only a little over a century before the time of the Reformation, the Protestants form but a small fraction of the population. Though there are a few Calvinists in isolated areas, most of the Protestants are Lutherans. Unfortunately, during the years between the wars, there was violent disagreement between those of German and those of Lithuanian stock; and the whole life of the Church was adversely affected by this bitter strife. It found one expression in the struggle over the Protestant theological faculty in Kaunas University, the Germans desiring its suppression so that students for the ministry might be compelled to study in Germany, the Lithuanians desiring its continuance so that this result might be avoided.

## CENTRAL EUROPE.

There are important Lutheran minority Churches in Austria, in Poland, in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary. In Austria, and in those parts of Poland which formerly belonged to Austria, Lutherans and Calvinists are united in a "Church of the Augsburg and Helvetic Confessions," which maintains German-speaking congregations in most of the larger centres of population. Elsewhere in Poland there are both German and Polish Lutheran Churches; unhappily these were rent during the inter-war period by most bitter strife on political and national lines. Lines of division between the Churches in this part of Europe tend to run along the same tracks as those which divide national groupings; and the sense of unity in Christ unfortunately has not hitherto proved sufficiently strong to overcome the animosities that arise from national differences. Tribute should, however, be paid to these Churches for fine work done in several directions, notably in the sphere of benevolence and social service.

In Czechoslovakia and in Hungary, though here again national and ecclesiastical groupings tend to coincide, the tension between different branches of Lutheranism has been far less marked. In Czechoslovakia the Czech Lutherans united after the last war with the Czech Calvinists to form the Church of the Czech brethren, in which Hussite influence was predominant; whilst the German Lutherans, separately organised in Bohemia and Moravia and in Slovakia, maintained their independence and carried on good work unobtrusively. In Hungary the Lutheran Church, like the Reformed (Calvinist) Church, is of Magyar nationality. Both Churches wield an influence out of all proportion to their size; both carry on extensive educational work at all stages from the elementary school to the university; and both have a curious system of government, wherein each Church court has two presidents of equal authority, a bishop and a lay curator.

Reference may be made finally to the situation in France, where after the restoration of Alsace and Lorraine there was a Lutheran Church of not inconsiderable importance. Though in the rest of metropolitan France the policy of "a free Church in a free State" was in force, and the State accorded no financial or other recognition to any of the Churches, in these two provinces the system of State assistance to the Churches was maintained throughout the period between the two world wars.



## V

### THE REFORMED CHURCH

WHILST in Anglo-Saxon countries the Churches that followed the lead of the Swiss reformers were characteristically described in terms of their organisation and government as "Presbyterian," on the Continent they were equally characteristically described in terms of their theology as "Reformed" or "Calvinistic." As compared with the Lutheran Churches they have generally taken a somewhat activist line, claiming that it was the duty of the Church to speak in God's name with regard to all spheres of human life, political, social and economic, no less than with regard to man's more specifically "religious" duties; and in regard to the State they have insisted upon the right of the Church to exercise its task without interference and in the full enjoyment of liberty. Deriving from this claim for the liberty of the Church over against the State, there has been a general tendency in Reformed Church spheres of influence to assert the right of men not merely to religious, but also to political liberty; and it is certainly true that liberty has nowhere been more highly prized than in such lands as Switzerland, Holland, Great Britain and America, where the influence of the Swiss Reformation has been greatest.

Calvinistic theology centres upon the doctrine of the sovereignty of God; the sovereignty, however, of the God of grace, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Attributing to God's grace every moral victory that we may win, the Calvinist claims as his own only his sin. His is the point of view of a man who feels the greatness of his need, his own utter inability to save himself, and the wonder of the grace of God through which his salvation has been achieved for no merit of his own. This doctrine, which springs from a true and deep spiritual experience, when carried to its logical conclusions, becomes in certain respects repellent; and it has been the misfortune of Calvinism that too often its adherents have insisted upon logic to the point at which the original religious experience of God's grace and love in Jesus Christ have become largely lost to view. The fact is that "life is larger than logic"; and that to attempt to confine religious experience

within a strictly logical system is analogous to the attempt to explain a living organism in terms of chemical substances or of mechanics.

The Calvinist was expressing a profound truth when he referred his "calling," his redemption and his achievements in the Christian life, not to himself, but to God alone. When he formulated these convictions into a doctrine of predestination he entered upon more doubtful territory; and when he completed his system by a doctrine of reprobation, he not only found himself upon highly contentious ground, but to many seemed to be denying his original conviction of the sovereign love of God. To feel yourself so much within the hand of God as to believe that God has predestined you for life in His service is one thing; to go on to explain the fact that there are others who are not serving Him by the assertion that He has predestined them not for life but for death, is quite another matter.

Two points may, however, here be emphasised. First, that there has continuously been controversy within the Reformed Churches as to how far these doctrines are to be carried; so much so that in several lands cleavages have occurred which have led to the setting up of rival Reformed Churches differing in their interpretation of the Calvinist theology. And, of course, at the present time the various Churches differ considerably in regard to their theology, traditional or liberal; though they are united by their central emphasis on the sovereignty of God. Second, that so far from producing men who, because they believed themselves to be predestined, felt that they need themselves do nothing, Calvinism has always tended to produce men who because they believed themselves to be predestined to be fellow-labourers with the sovereign God, felt that no man could withstand them in the long run, and gave themselves with a courage and steadfastness that no suffering or disappointment could daunt to the high and costly and triumphant service for which they believed that God Himself had chosen them.

Reformed Churchmen usually prefer on principle a simple type of worship, in which the reading and preaching of the Word of God is central, and in which the claim is to obedience rather than to religious emotion as the true expression of adoration. A simple liturgy is used in most of the Reformed Churches on the Continent, based as a rule upon an order of service drawn up by Calvin himself. In this a generous share



is allotted to congregational praise. The reformers early introduced into public worship the singing of the psalms in the metrical version, which had been composed, in French and other languages, during the sixteenth century before hymns as we know them had come into use, and which had achieved widespread popularity in all circles from kings' courts to peasants' festivals; and in most Reformed Churches these still hold a considerable place, along with more modern hymns, in the service of praise.

The minister, who usually wears the Geneva gown and bands (for many years the normal dress of the clergy also of the Church of England, instead of the surplice and stole), conducts the service from the pulpit, which in most cases holds a central position in the plain and unadorned church building. The communion table stands as a rule in front of the pulpit, but in any case centrally and isolated. The sacrament of Holy Communion is celebrated at regular intervals, more or less frequently according to local custom. In every case it is regarded among the Reformed Churches as the supreme and most solemn of the religious acts of the congregation, preparation services beforehand and thanksgiving services afterwards being not uncommon. There are local differences in administration of this sacrament, the elements sometimes being carried to the congregation in the pews, whilst sometimes those intending to participate are invited to approach the table; but in all cases participants partake of both the bread and the wine, and the minister, who is usually assisted by elders, conducts the service from behind the table. The Reformed Churches repudiate the doctrine of transubstantiation, but maintain that Christ is really present, not however in the elements but in the hearts and in the fellowship of the faithful; and regard the rite both as an occasion for re-dedication and self-offering, and as the "seal" of God's redemptive love. They do not regard it as a mere service of remembrance. A somewhat similar view is taken with regard to the sacrament of Baptism, which is both the occasion for the dedication of a child to God by Christian parents, and the "seal" of God's enrolment of the child in His Church.

Ministers of the Reformed Churches are ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, a court of the Church; and in many of the Churches the non-ministerial elders are also ordained by the laying on of hands. The government of the Churches is in all cases conciliar. The local congregation is

governed by the elders (including the minister); ministers and, as a rule, certain elders from the congregations in an area form the Presbytery; representatives from a group of Presbyteries form the Synod; whilst in a similar way the supreme court of each Church, whether called the Assembly, or some other name, is composed of duly elected representatives of the lower courts. Bishops are not found in Reformed Churches, their functions being discharged by Presbyteries or other courts; though in certain cases there are permanent Church officials who bear the title, but do not discharge the normal functions, of bishops. Finally, the Reformed Churches of the world are united loosely in the "Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System," more usually known as the General Presbyterian Alliance, which meets in conference every four years alternately in America and in Great Britain or on the European Continent.

Church statistics are notoriously unreliable, and they are made more so by the fact that in different Churches the method of reckoning membership is various. Some reckon as members all who have been baptised; others those only who have recently been present as communicants at a service of Holy Communion, whilst other methods of calculation are also used. The most recent figures, compiled by the Presbyterian Alliance in 1937, give the following particulars for Reformed Churches on the Continent of Europe: 7470 congregations, with 1689 other "preaching points": at least 3,016,201 communicants; and at least 9,767,680 baptised persons. The majority of these are to be found in Holland, Hungary, Roumania and Switzerland, with considerable numbers also in Czechoslovakia, France and Germany. (These references are to the countries as they were prior to the present war.) The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to necessarily brief accounts of the Reformed Churches in each of these lands, and to the smaller groups that may be found elsewhere.

## HOLLAND.

Though there is a considerable Roman Catholic minority, the greater part of the population of the Netherlands is connected with the Reformed Church to which of course the House of Orange has always steadfastly adhered from the days when national and religious liberty were one in the fight against Roman Catholic Spain, to the present time when again they



are united against Nazi totalitarianism. Unfortunately theological disputes have frequently rent the Church in this land, ranging from questions of freewill and predestination in earlier times to those of the liberal or authoritarian interpretation of the Scriptures more recently. As a result there are several separate Reformed Churches, the largest of which is "established" or State-recognised, whilst the remainder are free. The most considerable of the latter maintains in Amsterdam not only its own theological college, but also a complete university in which scientific and other subjects are taught in such a way as not to contradict the literal interpretation of Scripture. Each of the two main Reformed Churches has associated with it a corresponding Christian political party, the Free Church taking perhaps the largest part in the life of the State. The present Prime Minister, Professor Gerbrandy, is a loyal and convinced Free Churchman. It should also be added that the Dutch Churches have taken a notable part in the missionary enterprise of the last two centuries, their labours in the Dutch East Indies having been particularly successful.

## HUNGARY

Though there are in Hungary considerably more members of the Roman Catholic than of the Reformed Church, the latter is a strong body of very considerable numerical size, and the Regent, Admiral Horthy, is a member of it. Prior to the Counter-Reformation by far the greater part of the population adhered to the Reformed Church, which has always remained in close association with the Swiss Churches, and which retains a strongly Calvinistic point of view of the orthodox traditional type. It still provides much of the cultural and political leadership of the nation, though since the partition of Hungary by the Treaty of Trianon (1920) large sections of the Church have been separated and transferred to Roumania, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. (Since the outbreak of the present war considerable numbers of these separated brethren have been restored to Hungary and to their mother-Church.)

A visitor to an ordinary service of public worship would note with surprise that in prayer the people keep their eyes open, with their gaze directed upwards, as though in token of expectancy; and in some districts men and women occupy different portions of the Church. As is usual among continental Protestants the congregation remains seated during

the singing of hymns and psalms, but stands for public prayer.

Outstanding among the activities in this country of the Reformed Church, which incidentally has here the distinction of having always remained united, is its great educational programme. The Church maintains hundreds of elementary and secondary schools, and is still largely represented on the governing bodies of two or three universities, which only a generation or two ago were entirely under Church control. By contrast the foreign missionary movement has only recently made headway in this Church. The titular "bishops" of this Church preside at meetings of the superior Church courts along with the "lay curators," who as elders hold parallel office; and they are *ex-officio* members of the Hungarian House of Magnates (the upper house in the legislature).

#### ROUMANIA

In a part of Europe where national, linguistic and religious lines of division usually run parallel, it is perhaps not surprising that the Reformed Church in Roumania, which is responsible for about three-quarters of a million souls, should consist entirely of persons of Hungarian descent, living for the most part in Transylvania. Three centuries ago the princes of Transylvania were politically of considerable consequence, and are said to have introduced the principle of religious toleration into their domains at an earlier date than it was introduced anywhere else. Unhappily the social and cultural cleavage between the Hungarian and Roumanian inhabitants of this region has been very marked, both under Hungarian and under Roumanian rule; and under the latter the Church, which enjoyed high privileges and considerable wealth when the province belonged to Hungary, has lost most of its privileges and the greater part of its wealth. Since the outbreak of the present war Transylvania has been partitioned between the two countries under the so-called "Dictate of Vienna"; and the number of Reformed Church members remaining under Roumanian authority is probably only one-third of what it was.

#### SWITZERLAND.

Though the Swiss Reformation began at Zurich, Geneva soon became the main stronghold of the Reformed Church;



and from its college trained ministers were sent out to lead the movement for reform throughout Europe and the British Isles. During the four centuries since that time the Swiss Churches have undergone many vicissitudes, passing through various periods of rationalism, of evangelicalism and of traditionalism. Each canton has its own local state-recognised Church, for the most part Reformed (there are one or two Roman Catholic cantons); and under the stress of theological and other tensions there are in most cantons also Reformed Free Churches. To-day, however, there is a strong tendency towards reunion; and the majority of these Churches have already come together in a Swiss Federation of Churches, which adheres to the General Presbyterian Alliance.

There is no country in which the Reformed Churches have taken a greater share of responsibility for helping small and weak Churches in other European lands, great sums being raised annually for this purpose; and the Swiss Churches have also taken a lead in foreign missionary enterprise, and in the ecumenical movement of recent years. It was not due solely to geographical situation that Geneva became the centre both of the League of Nations and of the ecumenical movement; for already in Calvin's time the city was an international and ecumenical centre and stood for freedom, for Christian democracy, for the union of the Church Reformed, and for sound learning; and President Wilson, himself a Reformed Churchman, rightly believed that this tradition still survived.

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

Well over a century before the Reformation in Germany and in Switzerland, a remarkable movement for ecclesiastical reform had broken out in Bohemia, the land of the Czechs, under the leadership of John Hus, who himself drew much of his theological inspiration from our own John Wiclif. As so often happens, national aspirations were mingled with zeal for religious reform, and under the preaching of the reformer the greater part of the nation rallied to the new movement. Hus himself was eventually burned at the stake as a heretic, but the movement grew, and was only overthrown (temporarily, as it proved) some two centuries later. When toleration was restored the various fractions of the Hussite Church came together, and after Czechoslovakia had achieved its independence in 1919 they united with the Czech Lutherans in the

Church of the Czech Brethren, which grew until in 1937 it had some 200 congregations and as many mission stations, and was one of the most vigorous and forward-looking Reformed Churches in Europe.

#### FRANCE.

During the period of the religious wars it almost looked, for a time, as though France as a whole might adhere to the Reformed faith; but the tide turned, and there are to-day perhaps three-quarters of a million souls in the country (inclusive of Alsace and Lorraine) who have some kind of connection with the Reformed Church. Unhappily this Church divided into three or four fractions during the nineteenth century, partly on theological grounds, partly owing to questions of relationship with the State. In 1939, however, the greater number of these fractions re-united as the Reformed Church of France. The Reformed Church in Alsace-Lorraine, however, remained apart, as for historical reasons it has relations with the State and some State support, whilst in metropolitan France there is no established Church.

The Reformed Church is strongest in Paris and towards the boundaries of the country, north-east, south and south-west. It has large foreign missionary interests, the scale of giving for this purpose in proportion to membership and resources being probably greater than that of any other Church except the Moravian.

#### GERMANY.

Certain of the German States followed the Swiss rather than the Lutheran model at the time of the Reformation; and although the Lutherans to-day greatly outnumber the Reformed, the latter are by no means negligible. In Prussia, under Frederick William III, a union took place under pressure between the two communions, each congregation being permitted to retain its adherence to the confession of its choice, Lutheran or Reformed as the case might be; and this arrangement still holds good in the United Church of Prussia. The House of Hohenzollern, and the late President Von Hindenburg, were members of this United Church and adherents of its Reformed wing. Though Lutherans and Reformed, and the Churches of the various states, have been brought recently



much closer together under Nazi pressure and oppression, the theological distinction between the adherents of these two branches of Protestantism is still a powerful force to keep them distinct from one another.

#### OTHER COUNTRIES.

There are comparatively small Reformed Churches, remnants of larger communities at an earlier time, in Lithuania and Poland. In Greece there is a small but very vigorous Evangelical Church, whose origin was due mainly to foreign influences; and the two Reformed Churches in Belgium (one "established," the other "free") trace their origin in large part also to influences from outside, as does the Evangelical Church in Spain. The most interesting, however, of the smaller Reformed communities in Europe is the Waldensian Church of Italy. Towards the end of the eleventh century, under the influence of a certain Peter Waldo of Lyons, who went about preaching a simple evangelical type of Christianity, an influential religious movement (somewhat similar to the later Franciscan movement) developed in southern France and northern Italy; and when its adherents were driven out of the Church and threatened with persecution, they took refuge among the valleys of the south-western Alps and elsewhere. Thanks, as they themselves believed, to the protection of God, or as their enemies declared to the fact that they inhabited a mountainous frontier between two states that were frequently at war and could never agree together to suppress them, they maintained their existence and their faith until the time when they were able to throw in their lot with the Genevan Reformation, and to provide at their own expense the first Bible in the French language for their fellow-believers in France and in Switzerland. In spite of many violent persecutions these people still inhabit certain of the valleys of the Italian Alps in the neighbourhood of Torre Pellice, and carry on extensive evangelistic work throughout the whole of Italy.

#### *The Czechoslovak Church*

When the Czechoslovak Republic was founded in 1918, after the first World War, large numbers of people left the Roman Catholic Church, with which the great majority of the population was connected. The reasons for this secession

were partly religious and partly political. John Hus, who was burned as a heretic at Constance in 1415, was not only a reformer of the Church, but also a national hero and the founder of Czech as a literary language. The Roman Church had always, from that time onwards, been regarded by Czech patriots with some hostility; and in 1918 it was closely associated in men's minds with the Hapsburg monarchy, from which the country had liberated itself. Latent Hussite tradition therefore combined with patriotic and political motives to produce an exodus from the Roman Catholic Church, which is said to have amounted in all to about two million persons.

About half of the secessionists united under the leadership of former Roman Catholic priests to form the Czechoslovak Church, which for a while retained some of the ceremonies and of the pageantry of the Roman ritual, together with its episcopal government in a modified form, the patriarch and bishops being elected by and responsible to the courts of the Church. After 1924, however, an entirely new liturgy was adopted which aimed at combining simple forms of communal worship with the retention of some artistic qualities in the cult. For some time indeed the direction in which the new Church was likely to develop remained uncertain. Some of its leaders sought association with, and approximation to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Others, of "liberal" theological outlook, sought contact rather with Unitarianism. Yet others, very conscious of the debt of their country to Czech religious reformers in the past, seemed inclined to exalt patriotic ceremonies within the Church almost to an equality with traditional Christian worship. Perhaps the strongest influence was that which sought to reconcile the traditional teaching of Christianity with the reliable achievements of modern thought. Meanwhile an agreement was reached whereby the theological students of the Church were trained at the John Hus theological faculty in the University of Prague; a faculty originally founded for the training of ministers of the Church of the Czech Brethren, to which in 1934 were added four professorships to be held by members of the Czechoslovak Church.

It would probably be true to say that of recent years the tendency within the Church has been for the most part in an evangelical direction. The Unitarian influence seems largely to have receded, and cordial relations have been established with the Church of England and with the whole ecumenical



movement; whilst there are clear signs of still closer association in the future with traditional Czech Protestantism. Though under German pressure during the war the Church has been compelled to change its name and to suffer separation between its Czech and Moravian members on the one hand and its Slovak members on the other, there appears to be every prospect of the restoration and perhaps the extension of its influence when peace is restored in Central Europe.

### *The Unitarian Churches*

“ On the continent, as far back as the sixteenth century, an organised Unitarian Church of about 300 congregations existed in Poland during a period of religious toleration, with a great university college at Racow; but an era of ruthless persecution followed, and the movement was completely suppressed. The Italian Socinus was influential in this Church, whence Unitarian Christianity was labelled ‘Socinianism.’ During the same period a Transylvanian Unitarian Church of about 400 congregations was established under Francis David, its first bishop; despite much persecution and opposition it still survives, though not in its original strength.

“ In their complete freedom of thought and worship the various Unitarian Churches have reached a common outlook in religion, while refusing to fix or formulate their belief. They hold that the essentials of Christianity are found in the great affirmations of the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the leadership of Jesus, the victory of good, the kingdom of God and the life eternal. In their history two contrasted tendencies are discerned—the desire for lucid and definite theological teaching, and the desire for complete religious freedom. There is no real contrast between these two, and both are vital to the spirit of the movement.”<sup>1</sup>

### *Other Denominations*

Scattered throughout the European countries are companies of evangelical Christians whose origins may be traced to the missionary enterprise of British and American Churches and evangelistic societies. Some of these have taken firm root on the Continent and have become indigenous to the countries

<sup>1</sup> Mortimer Rowe, in *A Christian Year Book*, 1943 edition, p. 65.

in which they are to be found, whilst others are still largely dependent upon the country of their origin.

Continental Protestants are as a rule inclined to be highly critical of the rather extensive activities of such bodies as the Plymouth Brethren, the Pentecostal League and the Seventh Day Adventists, which have established many centres of work and which regard both the priesthood and the ministerial office as unscriptural. It is alleged that for the most part the adherents of these bodies are drawn from the Protestant Churches rather than from the churchless masses; and that although sometimes individuals have been awakened to renewed religious zeal the general effect of the activities of these organisations has been disintegrating and weakening to the forces of Protestantism as a whole.

The work of the Methodist Churches has been on a more substantial scale; and although sometimes the same criticism has been directed against them, more especially against the new causes started by the Methodist Episcopal Church of America in the years following the last war, European Methodism has for the most part worked in association with the older Protestant Churches, has in several countries become quite naturalised, and has on the whole brought new life and zeal to the European Churches. The improved relations between Methodism and the older Churches are illustrated by the fact that in France the small, though far from inconsiderable, Methodist Church united just before the war with the Reformed Churches in the Reformed Church of France; and that in Italy a union between the Methodist Church and the much larger Waldensian Church is in process of accomplishment.

There is a strong Methodist Church in Germany, in association with other Free Churches in that land. Though small by comparison with the Lutheran Churches, it maintains a theological college and an excellent hospital served by its own deaconesses and doctors; and undertakes other social and religious work in various parts of the country. Prior to the war the leaders of German Methodism were somewhat critical of the attitude of "confessional" Lutherans; and it may be that the latter were unduly inclined to ignore representatives of a Church that they regarded as small, heterodox and alien!

In addition to these communities which are largely of foreign origin, there are in Europe other important religious groups which came into being on the Continent itself. Out-



standing amongst these are the Moravians and the Baptists.

The Moravian Church, as its name implies, found its original home in Moravia as one of the numerous religious groups which traced their origins to the influence and teaching of John Hus in the early fifteenth century. It received new inspiration from its most distinguished member, Count Zinzendorf (1700–1760), who gave to its members the profound missionary enthusiasm which directed his own life and activities. Persecuted in its home land, the little community found refuge upon Zinzendorf's estate in Herrnhut in Saxony, which has been its headquarters from that date (hence the frequent nickname "Herrnhuters"). The Moravian Church is distinguished above all others for the extent of its missionary labours in proportion to its total membership, which is small; and it might even be described as a hereditary missionary society! Moravian communities are to be found principally in Germany, where they are accorded the utmost respect by the Lutherans, who regard them as belonging to one of the historic confessions, in contradistinction to members of the Sects—a word that is used to describe all religious bodies which are neither Catholic, Lutheran nor Reformed.

"The Moravian Church has episcopal orders and cherishes its ancient traditions but, with simplicity of worship, seeks also to maintain freedom of growth. The Holy Scriptures remain its only rule of faith and conduct; it imposes no credal test and recognises the essential unity of Christians beneath all diversity of experience."<sup>1</sup>

Baptists are to be found scattered throughout Europe. Their origins can be traced to two main sources: The influence of British and American Baptists; and, more important, the reading of the Scriptures by simple folk who sought to practise literally the precepts of the Gospel and to follow the example of the early Church. No direct connection with the Anabaptist movement, which arose at the time of the Reformation, can be traced; the only religious group which arose in Anabaptism and still survives being that of the Mennonites, of whom there are some 60,000 in Holland, a similar or perhaps rather greater number in Russia, and a few thousands in Germany. They take their name from Menno Simons, a religious leader of Reformation date, and maintain a form of Christianity which, discarding the sacerdotal idea, owns no authority outside the

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Shawe, in *A Christian Year Book*, 1943 edition, p. 51.

Bible and the enlightened conscience, limits baptism to the believer, and lays stress on those precepts which vindicate the sanctity of human life and of a man's word. Thus, while sharing with Baptists the doctrine of believers' baptism (which, however, may be by sprinkling and not necessarily by immersion), they differ from them by refusing military service, the taking of oaths and the acceptance of magisterial office. The Russian Mennonites are of German extraction, having been provided sanctuary in that country by Catherine the Great.

The Baptists of western Europe mostly trace their origins to Anglo-Saxon influence, and are to be found chiefly in Germany, Sweden, the Baltic States and Hungary, in all of which countries they have taken strong root during the last century or more. They are organised on Congregational principles, and take a pronounced "Free Church" line, refusing financial and other assistance from the State. In Sweden, however, the 50,000 Baptists, while maintaining their own distinctive life, are, like other non-Lutherans who have not made formal declaration of withdrawal, considered at the same time to be a part of the national Church. Throughout these countries they belong, for the most part, to the urban population; in Scandinavia they have given much attention to the application of Christianity to social affairs, and in Germany they have developed to a marked extent the work of deaconesses, who are mostly engaged in nursing service.

Both in western and eastern Europe the worship of Baptists is of the type familiar in the English Free Churches, with emphasis upon the preaching of the Word of God, and with a considerable part given to congregational singing; whilst the general temper of their Churches is strongly evangelistic, and (more particularly in eastern Europe) their outlook is that of a rather rigid Puritanism. The influence of C. H. Spurgeon upon Baptists throughout the Continent has been very marked.

In eastern Europe Baptists belong, for the most part, to the rural population; though in northern Russia the movement has had some influence upon urban circles also. They are to be found principally in Roumania and in Russia. In the former country, where there are some 65,000 baptised adult members of the Baptist Churches, music has been greatly developed in religious services, the excellence of the large choirs being noted by friends and opponents alike. There is a general tendency in this country for the State authorities to confuse the Baptists



with other groups of sectarians, to the disadvantage of the former; but whereas the sectarians are mostly ill organised and refuse military service on conscientious grounds, the Baptists are well organised and have no scruples about such service.

In the U.S.S.R. there are two Baptist organisations, which during the present war have come closer together and are now probably working in association; they may even possibly have fused. The Union of Baptists arose in Caucasia in the sixties of last century among peasants who had learned to read and study their New Testaments, and who at first were ignorant of the existence of Baptists elsewhere. With this movement, which grew rapidly, there later merged another Baptist movement in the Ukraine, which had developed from so-called "Stundist" circles, and the Russian Baptist Union was formed in 1884. Meanwhile, some ten years earlier, an evangelical movement had been started in St. Petersburg (now Leningrad), among members of the aristocracy, through the preaching of Lord Radstock, an Englishman of strongly evangelical outlook. The revival spread to other classes of the community, and after some vicissitudes took definite Baptist shape. In 1908 it was regularly organised as the "Union of Evangelical Christians," and in due course was accepted to membership in the Baptist World Alliance.

After the revolution of 1917, which was greeted at first with approval by both Baptist groups, difficulties began to appear. The official attitude to the Orthodox Church began to apply also to other religious communities, and the Baptists themselves, in both groups, were inclined to take a pacifist attitude, which increased the suspicion of the State authorities towards them. Since the invasion of Russia, however, this point of view seems to have been finally abandoned by the Russian Baptists, who now appear to be on terms of cordiality with the State. Estimates of the number of Russian Baptists vary considerably, and no reliable figures can be given; but there are certainly some hundreds of thousands of baptised believers, and they themselves have put their number at four millions, but without making it clear whether this is an estimate of church membership or of community strength. Others have given even higher figures.

The countries named are those in which Baptists are found in strength, but smaller communities exist in all continental countries except Albania, European Turkey and Greece.

## VI

### THE CHURCH IN ACTION

#### *Worship*

THOUGH at first sight the worship of Protestants, of Roman Catholics and of Orthodox Churchmen presents sharp contrasts, there are certain elements which are common to all, but which receive differing emphasis. In all the major forms of Christian worship a place is found for the reading and exposition of the Scriptures; for the expression of praise and adoration through hymn and psalm; for the offering up of the prayers of the faithful; and for the observance of the Sacraments. Among Protestants in general emphasis is particularly laid upon the centrality of the Word of God; the pulpit is placed in a conspicuous position, the open Bible often lies upon the Holy Table, and the sermon occupies a considerable proportion of the time allotted to worship. Among Roman Catholics and the Orthodox greater emphasis is laid upon the more mystic elements in worship, and the use of ancient and often gorgeous ceremonial; their Churches usually remain open for private devotion during the week, and it is customary, especially for Roman Catholics, to make use of this opportunity by spending a few moments in prayer in the Church when opportunity offers. Congregational worship, on the other hand, is distinctive of Protestantism; the worshippers being expected to take a more active and united part in the worship than is the case in the other communions. Though the part taken by the Protestant minister in the conduct of public worship is as a rule as conspicuous as that taken by the Roman Catholic or the Orthodox priest, and though most Protestant congregations would hardly be able to hold a service without the guidance of a minister, in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches public worship could be held without the presence of a congregation, whilst this would hardly be possible among Protestants. A further distinction that might be made between the two types of worship is that normally the Protestant takes part in worship that he may learn to know and be given grace to perform the will of God, whilst the Roman Catholics and the Orthodox



seek rather in worship to bow in awe and adoration before the Most High. All these distinctions are only approximate, and must not be over-stressed; they may, however, serve to draw attention to some of the major variations in attitude and emphasis between those who belong to differing traditions.

The European Protestant, whether Lutheran or Reformed, has normally a rather strongly developed sense of Christian fellowship within the congregation or the parish; and very frequently also of the Christian fellowship that unites in one the whole membership of the Church, not only in his own country, but also throughout the world. He is as a rule less conscious of the sense of Christian fellowship with believers of a former time, and of the continuity of the Church throughout the centuries. For the ordinary believer Christian history leaps from New Testament times to the days of the Reformation, and he has little knowledge of or interest in the events of the vast period between those two dates. Though the lack of a common language in the services of the Church in different lands makes active fellowship in worship with Christians of other nations difficult, the general use of the black preaching-gown and white bands by both Lutheran and Reformed ministers serves to indicate in a striking fashion the continuity of Protestantism from one land to another. Here and there, however, other forms of dress are used; thus in Denmark and Norway, as in one or two regions in Germany, the preacher wears with his black gown a white Elizabethan ruff; and in Sweden the use of the cope and other gorgeous vestments has been retained for ceremonial occasions. Among the smaller Protestant groups the use of preaching-gowns or other distinctive garments is unusual.

Reference may perhaps be made to certain peculiarities of custom in regard to worship that are to be found in various parts of the Continent. In the Protestant Churches generally it is the custom to stand for prayer and to remain seated during the singing of the hymns. The latter are usually sung at a very much slower pace than is the custom in this country. The organ holds an important place in public worship in most Lutheran and in some Reformed Churches; the voluntaries being a quite definite part of the worship, and not merely "incidental music" as is so often the case in Britain. In Hungary the Protestant ministers do not close their eyes when leading in public prayer, but direct their gaze upwards. In some countries men and women sit apart during

worship, the men on one side of the church, the women on the other. In Lithuania, and probably elsewhere, the people gather together spontaneously from time to time to sing hymns, not only in the Protestant, but also in the Roman Catholic churches; on these occasions there is often no priest or minister present, and apparently no pre-arranged plan.

In all the Churches the central act of worship is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to which various names are given. It is not necessary here to draw attention to the different ways in which that sacrament is observed in Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches; but it may be well to remark that it is regarded by the faithful in the Protestant Churches, no less than by those in the other two Churches, as an occasion of the greatest solemnity and sacredness, requiring due preparation of heart and conscience.

In the Roman Catholic Church the cup is withheld from the laity, who receive only the consecrated wafer. The claim of the early Bohemian reformers that the laity should also receive the wine led to the adoption of a cup as a symbol of reformed religion in that country. The details of administration of the rite vary somewhat in different Protestant Churches. In the Reformed Church of France communicants gather round the communion table, where they remain standing whilst the minister gives to each the bread and the wine. Elsewhere communicants pass in slow procession around the table, receiving the elements from the minister or ministers as they proceed; whilst the rest of the congregation joins in the singing of a psalm or hymn, or a minister reads appropriate passages of Scripture. In some Churches the bread and the wine are brought by minister or elders to the worshippers who remain seated in their pews; whilst in others communicants kneel before the altar or communion table to receive the elements.

### *Mission and Evangelism. Church Life*

Foreign missionary interest is widely developed in certain European lands. In the case of the Orthodox Church it is probably less marked than amongst Roman Catholics and Protestants, the missionary activity of Orthodox Churchmen being largely confined to lands which are traditionally Orthodox (and partaking, therefore, rather of the nature of home missionary work). In China and Japan, however, and



also in Alaska, the Russian Orthodox Church formerly carried on extensive work, and in all these countries there are now indigenous Orthodox Churches.

The Roman Catholic Church, principally through its religious orders and through such organisations as the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, maintains vast missionary enterprises throughout the world. It is commonly stated that, in proportion to its size, Belgium provides a larger number of Catholic missionaries than any other country. Catholic missionary activity, of course, is not confined to heathen lands; and is widespread both in Protestant and in certain Orthodox countries. There is in Rome a college where missionaries have for many years been trained for work in eastern European countries; and the hope seems to be cherished that some day Russia may be opened up for missionary work by these specially prepared emissaries.

The Lutheran Churches of Germany and of Scandinavia, and the Reformed Churches of Holland and of Switzerland, have all had for many years large missionary activities, which in certain areas (*e.g.* in the Dutch East Indies) have resulted in the formation of very large native Churches. The Reformed Church of France spends upon its foreign missionary work a much larger proportion of its total resources than is the case with any of the British Churches. Even the smaller Protestant Churches have their own mission fields, their missionary activities being usually entrusted to the care of missionary societies, independent of the Churches, but working in close association with them. In recent years the Protestant Churches of Hungary have developed a foreign missionary interest, which previously had been lacking, no doubt in view of other tasks requiring attention nearer at hand.

Mention should also be made of the help offered by the stronger European Churches to those that are financially weaker. The Central Bureau for inter-Church Aid, with headquarters at Geneva, was founded after the first world war to provide an official channel for such help in the case of Protestant, and to a lesser extent of Orthodox, Churches. In addition, however, much assistance passes direct from one Church to another. The Gustav Adolf Verein is the principal agency for providing such assistance among the Lutheran Churches; and among the Reformed Churches the generosity of the Swiss Church has been outstanding. Help of this kind includes provision for theological students to study outside their own

country, to the mutual benefit of both Churches taking part in the exchange; and on occasion the supply of specially trained ministers to assist the weaker Churches with the oversight of their congregations. A goodly number of European theological students have, during recent years especially, enjoyed the hospitality of Scottish colleges.

All the Churches carry on a certain amount of evangelistic work in their own areas, though the enthusiasm put into this work, and the methods used, vary from place to place and from time to time. Amongst the Protestants the older methods have to some extent fallen recently out of favour, though special campaigns are occasionally organised, with large meetings and special speakers. The Oxford Group Movement exercised considerable influence in Norway and other northern countries shortly before the outbreak of the present war; and, especially under war conditions, Bible study groups have been found a particularly successful means both of interesting those who are only nominal Christians and of awakening the regular Church-goer to a deeper understanding of the Faith.

It has been stated that the "congregation" is largely a product of the Genevan Reformation, as contrasted with the "parish," which is the unit of worship and service in other branches of the Christian Church; and it is probably true that it is in the Reformed Churches that the sense of corporate congregational worship has been chiefly developed. Whilst the church and the parish hall are still, especially in country districts, the religious and social centres of the community in Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Orthodox countries, the sense of fellowship in a Christian congregation is generally more marked in Reformed circles; and congregational "activities," such as those with which we are familiar in this country, are more frequently found in the last-named. Reference has already been made in passing to the wide development of Sunday-schools, Bible classes, and choral singing in connection with many of the European Churches; whilst special meetings for prayer are a feature in some places. The Salvation Army is at work throughout most of the Continent, though its activities have been seriously curtailed in Axis-controlled territory during the war and pre-war periods. The Society of Friends has small but fairly influential groups in various parts of Europe. The Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., Scouts and Guides, are popular and widely extended in many countries



usually carrying on their work in close association with the various Protestant Churches.

### *Social Service*

In the U.S.S.R. the Churches were not until recently permitted to engage in works of charity or in any kind of social service, but they have lately been encouraged to collect comforts for the Army and the wounded. Elsewhere in Europe all the Churches support charitable institutions of every kind, and accomplish much that in this country is undertaken on behalf of the under-privileged by voluntary societies or by the State. The extension of State services has, of course, been very marked during recent years; and both in Germany under National Socialism and in Spain under the Socialist regime the State sought to take over from the Church the greater part of the social agencies that had hitherto been under the control of the latter.

The Roman Catholic Church through its various organisations has maintained orphanages, homes for the aged, hospitals and many institutions for the benefit of the poor; and great numbers of consecrated men and women in the various religious orders devote their whole lives to the practical service of the less fortunate members of the community. Similar services are performed, though on a smaller scale, in the Orthodox Church through the monasteries which themselves often provide for the poor or the harassed a haven of refuge in which a quiet useful life may be spent in productive employment varied by devotional exercises.

Reference has already been made to the wide ramifications in Germany of the Inner Mission, which has its counterparts in other Lutheran countries; and too great praise cannot be given to the many tens of thousands of deacons and deaconesses, who, without any vow of celibacy, nevertheless for the most part find a life vocation in the service of the sick, the suffering and the poor, in the name of Christ and under the auspices of the Church. Visitors to the great deaconess training institutions, or to such a centre of social and medical service as the vast institutions of the Inner Mission at Bethel by Bielefeld, where many thousands of epileptics are tended, and where constructive work is done in the name of Christ for the reclamation of those who have proved a failure in life, cannot too highly express their admiration for

the work that is done and for the spirit in which it is performed.

Even the smallest and weakest Protestant Churches maintain their own charitable institutions. The orphanages and homes for the aged, which are supported by Protestants in such countries as Belgium and Italy, depend very largely upon innumerable tiny gifts from faithful Christian people, and only to a small extent upon large donations from the wealthy. Annual reports record such gifts as "a basket of potatoes," "a dozen eggs," "two kilogrammes of chestnuts," according to the nature of the district and the occupation of the donors.

The social activity of the Churches, however, does not consist purely in such "ambulance work." Constructive experiments in housing, in community living, in the provision of employment and the like, are carried out in connection with all the larger Churches; whilst "settlements" in the larger urban areas have done invaluable work throughout western Europe. Whilst it may be true of Europe, as it is of our own country, that there are Christians who would wish the Churches to confine their interest to the actual preaching of the Gospel, there are certainly others—and it would appear that they represent the main stream of European Church life—who find in social service a principal means for the expression of Christian love; and not a few who seek to secure the application of Christian principles in the social policy of the State itself.

### *Education*

Until the early part of the nineteenth century virtually the whole educational system in Europe was under ecclesiastical control, even the universities being still closely connected with the Churches, though in certain respects (*e.g.* in regard to medical and surgical research and experiment) they had achieved a measure of independence. During the last hundred years, however, to varying degrees in different countries, this control has been in part transferred from the Churches to the State; but over the greater part of the Continent the Churches still have very considerable educational interests, and many schools and institutions of higher education remain under their jurisdiction. It is significant, in this connection, that in several countries the Minister of Education is at the same time Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs; testifying to the close



connection of the educational and ecclesiastical systems, even when general supervision has been transferred to the State.

Reference has already been made to the importance of the religious question in Spain, where under different régimes education has been, successively, largely in the hands of the religious orders, then a monopoly of the State, and then once again under the religious orders. In the U.S.S.R., of course, control of the schools was entirely removed from the Church at the time of the revolution, and since then has remained completely secular. Elsewhere there is for the most part a compromise, control being divided between Church and State.

This is not the place for a detailed survey of the educational systems of the various European countries; but it may be mentioned that in Scandinavia there is close association between the schools and the Churches, though both are to some extent controlled by the State. In Germany the State had already taken over most of the Protestant schools before the rise of National Socialism, which completed the process, and liquidated Roman Catholic educational establishments at the same time. In France education has been under secular State control since the setting-up of the Third Republic in 1870, though this principle was not applied in Alsace and Lorraine when these were annexed after the first world war. In Italy, on the other hand, the majority of the schools were administered by the Church, even the small Protestant Churches, such as the Waldensian, having their own elementary and secondary schools and their own training colleges. Perhaps the service of the Church to education has been as great in Hungary, of recent years, as anywhere else on the Continent. There the greater part of all elementary and secondary education throughout the country is carried on in Church schools, the State providing the Churches with the funds required to carry on the work with the necessary efficiency. It is, in fact, only within the last twenty or thirty years that the State has taken over some of the universities, which until then had been entirely managed by the Churches.

In France and in Russia religious instruction has been excluded from the curriculum in the State schools; but elsewhere it has for the most part been included, provision being made for the instruction to be given by approved priests or ministers of religion during school hours, in accordance with the religious beliefs of the children's parents.

Sunday schools have been organised in connection with

most Protestant Churches, and occasionally in Orthodox circles also; and corresponding provision is made by the Roman Catholic Church for the teaching of its children. Young people's classes and Bible study groups are to be found in most parishes, and there has been a great increase in Bible study both among young people and among adults in Germany and in German-occupied countries during recent years.

Mention should also be made of the free universities maintained in Holland in time of peace by one of the Free Reformed Churches of fundamentalist persuasion, and by the Roman Catholic Church. In both these universities the educational standard is unexceptionable; but the dogmatic point of view of the Churches is stressed both in the philosophical and even in the scientific curriculum, as well, of course, as in courses on Christian theology. The existence in Belgium of the Roman Catholic University of Louvain, and elsewhere (as at Paris and Toulouse) of "Instituts Catholiques" of university standing, testify still further to the continued concern of the Church in the sphere of advanced education.

### *Relations with the State*

The question of Church and State, the cause of so much strife throughout the nineteen centuries since the Christian Church was founded, and which has taken many different forms under the Roman Empire, in the Middle Ages, and since the Reformation, has in recent years become once more a burning issue in almost every European country. The Liberal formula "A free Church in a free State" no longer satisfies the conditions of to-day, when even in democratic countries the tendency is towards much greater concentration of authority and of administration in the hands of the government. The rise of totalitarian "ideologies," with the accompanying claim of the State to dominate the thoughts as well as the activities of its citizens, has accentuated the difficulty in many lands; and the efficiency of modern propaganda methods, through the press, the radio, the cinema and the school, has placed a powerful instrument in the hands of those governments which seek to eliminate freedom of thought and to produce a uniform pattern of mind and a uniform outlook throughout their domains.

During the period between the two world wars the relation



of the State to the Church in different lands varied from frank hostility to cordial support; whilst conversely the attitude of the Church to the State varied between open opposition and close co-operation. Broadly speaking, in Orthodox lands, with the exception of the U.S.S.R., Church and State were on friendly terms, the former lending its powerful moral support to the latter, and accepting the leadership of the State and a measure of control, in return for some deference to the views of the Church in political questions, recognition of its place in the community, and in some cases financial assistance.

The Roman Catholic Church, as already mentioned, has adopted the policy of concluding concordats, or treaties, with secular states; and although some of these already adopted have been more favourable to the Church than others, the tendency has been for the Church gradually to acquire a stronger position in each state, owing first to the fact that negotiations have been carried on by the Vatican not only as the headquarters of the Church but also as an independent sovereign state with a recognised international standing, and second to the stability of Vatican policy contrasted with the uncertainty of those policies that are either subject to the personal opinions of autocrats (who do not live for ever !) or liable to the fluctuations caused by the changes of public opinion in the democracies.

A distinction should be drawn between the relations of majority and minority Churches with the State. The former may sometimes be satisfactory whilst the latter are often decidedly not so. Relations between the European states and those Churches which are not covered by concordats have usually been regulated by a Law of Cults, or its equivalent, under which the State recognises the Churches as organised bodies having legal personality, with certain rights and privileges, and lays down the limits of what is permitted to them in the way of holding property, winning converts, conducting worship, and undertaking public social services. In many European countries during the inter-war period great delays were experienced in reaching satisfactory regulations of this kind; with the result that not a few Churches, though continuing to function, had no assured position in the eyes of the law, and were subject to all the uncertainties and anxieties to which such a situation gave rise.

In several of the new states that were set up after the first

world war, especially in eastern Europe, the Churches were deprived of extensive landed properties and of other privileges to which they had been entitled under the former governments. Though in certain cases this may have been due to religious persecution, it was more often accounted for by the fact that the membership of the Church in question was politically or by language and nationality associated with the former sovereign power; or by the application to all landowners, individuals and corporations alike, of agrarian reforms (*e.g.* distribution of large estates among the peasants, with or without compensation to former owners). In some cases, too, Churches lost former privileges so that they might not be placed in a more favourable position than other Churches within the same territory which had never been accustomed to the same privileges and which perhaps represented a larger proportion of the whole population.

So long as the leadership in a state is friendly to the Church, relations between the two bodies are usually cordial, whether ultimate control rests theoretically with the one or with the other; but as soon as governments become neutral or hostile it is of the utmost importance to regulate the relations between the two if serious tension and strife are to be avoided. During the second world war the Church has stood forth in almost all occupied lands as the main embodiment of the nation's claim to freedom and as the strong bulwark of its best traditions; and if this close association can be maintained after hostilities cease, it ought not to be difficult to regulate satisfactorily the relations between the national Church and the State in the case of such nations. If the powerful urge for national unity persists, however, the position of the minority Churches may be considerably more difficult.

Obviously it would be fruitless to speculate at this stage on the form which this age-old problem is likely to assume when the war ends. That it will still present difficulties that will need to be solved is certain; for on the one hand there will assuredly be an accelerated tendency to centralisation and "planning" under State direction in almost every land; and on the other hand Christians have learned during the last few years by bitter experience that it is essential for the health and for the effective witness of the Church that it must maintain its rights and its freedom—of worship, of prophesying, of service—over against the State, however benevolent the latter may at any given time appear to be.



*Relations between the Churches : The Ecumenical Movement*

Within recent years there have been welcome signs of growing appreciation, on the part of each of the principal branches of the Christian Church, of the work and witness, the faith and tradition of the other Christian communions. Relations between Orthodoxy and Protestantism have steadily improved, especially since the first world war; and there is now fairly general recognition, on both sides, that there is good in the other. Leaders of both groups have come into frequent contact through the ecumenical movement and in the various conferences that it has organised; and knowledge of the principal tenets and of the historic position of both communities has been steadily growing within the ranks of the other. A word of special commendation may here be inserted of the part played by the Church of England in securing this happy result.

Between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy on the one hand, and Roman Catholicism and Protestantism on the other, there have been fewer signs of appreciation, at least until within the last few years; but it would appear that in many western European lands Catholics and Protestants have come into much closer association since the recent rise of anti-Christian ideologies, especially that of National Socialism. Thus in Germany, during the last ten years, Roman Catholics and Protestants have informally united their protests in defence of the Christian faith against attacks from outside, and have sometimes spoken appreciatively of the stand taken by the other party on some fundamental principle. The same process has been seen in German-occupied countries, especially in France and in Holland; in both countries protests have frequently been couched at least in part in identical terms, indicating careful collaboration on the part of the Church leaders. In Hungary there have been suggestions of informal conversations between Protestants and Catholics looking towards eventual reunion; and in Switzerland, even before the war, similar suggestions had been made. How far these tentative approaches may have the support of the Vatican cannot for certain be stated; but there are signs that the former rigid attitude of the Roman Catholic Church may be somewhat modified, in view of the changed situation in which the Christian Church everywhere finds itself in face of a largely secularised environment.

Unfortunately where Protestants are in a minority these more friendly relations with the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches do not subsist. There the general tendency for Protestants is to regard the dominant Church as unregenerate, and to be opposed on all occasions; whilst the dominant Churches for their part regard the Protestants as pestilent heretics to be exterminated by any means that are available. It will be sufficient to refer to the Evangelical Church in Greece, the Baptists in Roumania, the Protestant minorities in Spain, in Portugal and in Italy, perhaps also in Belgium, as examples of cases in which these unfortunate conditions are still to be found. Admittedly also, in certain countries, the attitude of the dominant Protestant Church to other Christian Churches, especially those which are apt to be despised as "the Sects," leaves much to be desired.

In spite of a general tendency to emphasise confessional interests during recent years, and to lay stress upon those features which distinguish the faith of one branch of the Church from another, the ecumenical movement has been of incalculable importance in drawing together Protestant and Orthodox Christians from many lands. In early days the movement principally affected the leaders of the Churches, who could actually meet together in conference with one another; but more recently, and especially since the outbreak of the second world war, the sense of "belonging together" with Christians of other traditions throughout the world has spread widely amongst the rank and file of the Churches on the European Continent; so that the movement has been described as no longer a luxury but a necessity.

The origins of this movement have frequently been described, and here it will suffice to refer to the influence of the Y.M.C.A. and the Student Christian Movement; of the missionary impulse which, following upon the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, eventually formed the International Missionary Council; of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, formed in 1914; of the Life and Work and Faith and Order Conferences, which were held during the twenties of the present century, and led in each case to the formation of a world-wide organisation to carry forward the work thus begun; and finally of the World Council of Churches, which is still in process of formation, but which already has secured the adherence of nearly all the principal Protestant Churches of the world and of many o



the Orthodox Churches, and which combines several of the earlier movements mentioned above. The headquarters of the World Council are at Geneva; and there is also, at Sigtuna in Sweden, a research institute which is under the control of the Church of Sweden, but which works in close collaboration with the World Council, and constitutes what is, in effect, an important secondary centre of the Council.

Throughout the course of the present war Christian leaders in every European land have maintained some measure of intercourse through the intermediary of the secretariats of the World Council and of the World Alliance. Arrangements are in hand for the meeting of representatives of the Churches as soon as conditions permit upon the conclusion of hostilities; and, in co-operation with the Central Bureau for Inter-Church Aid, for the setting up, under the auspices of the World Council of Churches, of a department of reconstruction, through which assistance may be brought to the European Churches, to enable them to restore their buildings, their institutions, and their whole Christian work, damaged and restricted so severely during the long years of war. For this purpose the generous support of Christian people in Britain and America will be imperative.

The Churches have, as always, grown stronger in faith during their time of difficulty and oppression; and, by the grace of God, there are prospects of wider influence and service before them in the post-war period, when the faithful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and loyal obedience to Him in all the practical affairs of life, will be the supreme need of humanity and the compelling call of God.

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*In the preparation of this booklet I have made free use of the following works, which I can cordially commend:*

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CHURCH AND STATE ON THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT. Adolf Keller. Epworth Press. 6/-.  
EUROPE IN TRANSITION (2 vols). Alexander McLeish. World Dominion Press. 9d. and 1/-.

*The following may also be recommended for reading in connection with special subjects:*

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### CHAPTER II

In view of some difference in presentation from the points of view of Greek and Slav, and of conservative and liberal, it may be well to consult both

(a) M. Constantinides, *The Orthodox Church* (Williams & Norgate, 6/-), and (b) N. Zernov, *The Church of the Eastern Christians* (S.P.C.K., 2/6), or Visser 't Hooft, *Anglo-Catholicism and Orthodoxy* (S.C.M. Press, 5/-).

### CHAPTER III

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## CHAPTER IV

See article on "Lutheranism," p. 42, *A Christian Year Book*, 1943 Edition. S.C.M. Press, 2/6.

## CHAPTER V

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F. M. Hnik and others, *The Czechoslovak Church*. (Prague, 1937, 1/-.) Apply to the Secretary of the Anglo-Czechoslovak Christian Fellowship, Fursecroft, George Street, London, W.1.

J. H. Rushbrooke, *Baptists in the U.S.S.R.* (Kingsgate Press, 1943, 4d.)

Some of the above are unfortunately at present out of print, but may doubtless be obtained from a Library.

## QUESTIONS FOR STUDY GROUPS

### ON FAITH AND ORDER.

1. What would you regard as the main contribution of each of the principal Christian communions to the Church Universal?

See the appendix to the Bishop of Lichfield's *One Church* (S.C.M. Press, 9d.).

2. To what extent are the differences between the Christian communions due to (a) theological, (b) social, political, economic, historical, or (c) temperamental causes? Dean Inge (*Hibbert Journal*, April 1943, p. 205) has classified pre-Reformation attempts to reform the Church as "catholic, mystical, puritanical." How far do these distinctions correspond to Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant? Or to Latin, Greek, Northern temperaments?

See pages 9, 42, 48, 58.

3. How far is variety of worship, organisation and theological emphasis desirable within the Universal Church?

See pages 24, 54, 58.

4. Which is the way forward—Co-operation or Union?

See page 69.

5. What would you regard as the right relationship between majority and minority Churches? Should a Church tolerate what it regards as serious error in another Church, or oppose it?

See pages 24, 54, 69, 70.

### ON LIFE AND WORK.

6. What steps can you suggest towards combining the Continental emphasis on faith with the Anglo-Saxon emphasis on action?

See pages 36, 64.

7. How can religious liberty within a nation be combined with national unity of purpose, and sense of community? Does not national and international unity depend upon a common ideology? And can that be found elsewhere than in religion?

8. Some Churches seem to have specialised more in missionary and evangelistic enterprise, others in social, charitable



or educational activity? Is emphasis on one form of Christian service likely to be at the expense of other forms, or do you think that in practice all can be combined? Which are the most essential forms of service, if a Church is not strong enough to accomplish all adequately?

See pages 35-36, 48, 55, 60-64.

9. Is it better for each religious community in a country to have its own schools, or for children of all religious bodies to attend the same schools with suitable provision for instruction in the tenets of their own communion?

See pages 64-66.

10. What part, if any, should the Church have in education?

See pages 47, 48, 64-66.

#### ON INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP.

11. How can the Churches best serve the cause of international friendship and world order?

#### ON CHURCH AND STATE.

12. What would you consider to be the ideal relationship between Church and State?

See pages 25, 66-68.

13. Do you regard the existence of national Churches as desirable or not?

See pages 9, 16, 66.

14. Do you think that Christian political parties serve a useful purpose or not?

See pages 25, 47.

#### ON THE LOCAL CHURCH.

15. Does the work of parish clergy and ministers need to be supplemented by that of specialists in such spheres as youth, evangelism, social service, etc.? Could this need to some extent be met by developing within Protestantism something corresponding to the religious orders of Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy?

See pages 15, 22-23, 63.

16. Do you agree with what was said on page 58 about the different ideas associated with worship by Roman Catholics

and Protestants? Note also what was said about the views of the Orthodox on this question.

See pages 16, 24, 34, 44, 58-60.

17. What importance, if any, do you attach to posture in worship?

See pages 47, 59.

18. What should be the place of the Church in the local community? Should it provide a community centre, or simply a religious centre for the neighbourhood?

19. Is it correct to assume that ordinary Church members share the theological viewpoint of their communion? Should they be encouraged to do so?



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